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CULTURE AND SURVIVAL

By the same author

BECKFORD,

CULTURE AND SURVIVAL

by

GUY CHAPMAN

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*Les pays sont comme les fruits, les vers
sont toujours à l'intérieur.*

GIRAUDOUX

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P R E F A C E

THE following essay which deals with one side of the population problem was completed nearly a year ago. On the advice of friends, certain additions and alterations were made; but owing to outside circumstances, its publication was delayed. Now war has broken out. To observers of population trends, the most conspicuous 'faults' in the curves are the precipitous falls occasioned by war. It would seem therefore that the discussion of the problem, both for the present and future, is not irrelevant to the present emergency, since a decline similar to that of 1914-18 will aggravate an already uneasy situation.

Parts of this book were originally intended for a study of changes in consumption goods during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The apparent connection between such changes and the lines of the birth and death rates as early as the seventies of last century roused my curiosity and induced me to pursue my study from this point of view.

It will of course be evident how much it is indebted to the work of Dr. Enid Charles and the other research workers in the Department of Social Biology at the London School of Economics. But for their publications (*The Twilight of Parenthood*, *Political Arithmetic*, etc.) this book could scarcely have come into being. One further debt must be acknowledged — to Professor A. G. B. Fisher's

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The Clash of Progress and Security. Although I disagree with the dating of his stages of economic progress, their conception appears to me of profound importance.

I shall never be able to repay the kindness and encouragement I received from my friend and one time tutor, R. H. Tawney, whose criticisms drove me to clarifications and extensions which laziness had let slide. To my wife, Storm Jameson, and to Ll. Wyn Griffith I owe much for giving me the intelligent citizen's reflections on a subject which while of vital importance to this country, can be obscured by technicalities. Their brutal *de quoi s'agit il?* remarks have imposed an undesired discipline upon this book. I would also thank Rupert Hart-Davis for reading the proofs and for purging them of the grosser jargon.

The book has been written in spare hours in between other work, and shows, I fear, many marks of haste. I have now even less time at my disposal; and I do not feel that polishing would add anything but grace to what I have written. The problem is one of an urgency no smaller than victory in the war. If it is ignored, as appears quite probable, the peace will indubitably be lost. For these reasons, I prefer to publish even incompletely expressed views if they serve to keep awake public interest.

G. C.

December 31st, 1939

CULTURE AND SURVIVAL

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CHAPTER I

ENGLAND BEFORE THE GROWTH OF POPULATION

I

THE general purpose of this book is to discuss a single aspect of the growth and decline of population in England and Wales, and more particularly the problem of the decline which to-day threatens. The aspect studied is the connection between what may be called culture, and the family. By culture I here intend that congeries of habitual thoughts and actions which are derived from the material circumstances, traditions and conventions of the average man in relation to his class rather than his conscious behaviour in relation to society. Culture in the broad sense has always borne a relation to the size of the family. It is the central purpose of this essay to examine the connection between deliberate restriction of the family and the habits of the average citizen of Great Britain, as they have been affected by changes in the technique of production and in distribution over the course of the last century.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first the treatment is historical, in that the argument is developed over a period of time, with, however, greater space and emphasis being given to the last hundred years. Society in the age before the invention of mechanical power is

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sketched with its culture and the bearing of its culture on the size of the family. It is a commonplace that before the nineteenth century, the greater part of production was handiwork, and for this reason, children were not a sentimental but a material blessing. Further, labour was directed rather to the provision of necessities than for the market. Such market as existed was discontinuous, labour was intermittent, and labour and leisure were not sharply and rigidly separate from each other. The installation of mechanical power in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, slow though it was, will be shown to have had consequences of supreme significance in the transformation of social habits. I am almost inclined to believe that the *circumstances* (not the political history) of the Ten Hours Movement which culminated in the Act of 1847, have a heavier bearing on the future history of this country than any other episode. There were two results. On the one hand, the technical consequences were such that output was vastly increased, while costs were reduced, and many goods hitherto regarded as luxuries became available to the lower income groups. On the other hand, the pre-power-age independence of time, which permitted the worker to spread his task over a week, or to concentrate it into two days as the fancy took him or his necessities commanded, was abolished. For the first time since Moses brought the six-day week down from Mount Sinai,¹ there is a clear demarcation of leisure and labour.

¹ A modern disciple of Marx would no doubt claim that Moses sanctified and thus imposed on the proletariat a 144-hour week.

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As a result of this novel division of the day, leisure became the earliest in an ever-increasing series of modern amenities. The new leisure, however, created a vacuum which was partly filled by the amusement industry, and partly by material goods invented in an ever-increasing volume. The growing subdivision and specialization of labour which contributed to this increasing volume of goods had the parallel social effect of increasing the stratification of society, creating more classes and more steps in the path of advancement. In a country such as England where *novi homines* had always an easier passage than on the Continent, the social climb became far less arduous. When a society reaches the stage of being able to provide itself with goods far beyond its necessities, and begins to base its respect for its members on their capacity for conspicuous spending, it is clear that economies will be made on those articles which do not demonstrably advertise the material success of their owner. The belief that one well-dressed, well-educated child is worth more than three or four shabby ones expresses a not necessarily selfish contemporary outlook.

In the second part of the book an attempt is made to analyse the bearing on the standard of life in the near future of a decline in the population as severe as that anticipated by the social biologists. It is a matter on which there is no general agreement. Both good and evil are variously predicted. Many remedies have been suggested, some of which may do no more than aggravate the disease. Here after an examination of possible conse-

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quences and the arrival at certain conclusions, a remedy is suggested, possibly flattering to a country which advertises so warmly its democratic institutions and traditions.

II

One of the most abused words in our language is 'revolution'. As soon as he sights it, the reader claps on to it a girdle of associations, French, Russian, industrial, bloody, and a decoration of symbols, Lenin, Robespierre, Arkwright, guillotine, OGPU. The word summons the colour of violence. More; it suggests a break with the past. This, in many ways, has been the fault of those writers who limit their interest to day by day events and ignore the larger, more leisurely, movements behind.

Revolution is a slow business. The innumerable minor currents which create a new idea are as imperceptible to contemporaries as the growing of a man. It is not until they look back that they recall from what the child grew. Revolution is a state of change. The violence with which the word is vulgarly associated, is no more than the explosion resulting from delay. Revolution is continuous. The fourteenth-century peasant who exchanged with a neighbour a distant strip of land for one adjacent to his larger holding, was contributing to a revolution no less than Dr. Guillotin or Bessemer. The process of change never stops, nor is it universal. There is never a clean break with the past, never a clean sweep by the new broom. Many elements are an unconscionable time

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a-dying. Their elimination may require decades or centuries. At every point in the world, even in so-called up-to-date communities, there are pockets of the past, relics of habits and ways of life, of modes of technique, of speech and behaviour, traditional survivals. The elimination of these features is the most hopeless task which authority can undertake. Lenin said: 'Give me four years to teach the children, and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.' Nevertheless, plants, whose seed was scattered centuries before the Romanovs snatched the throne, flourish side by side with Lenin's. In England, in the face of all the improver and encloser did over five centuries, the common field still exists, modified, it may be, but still the common field. There are men and women all over western Europe who, in spite of the pressure exerted on them by economic conditions, still hold to the customs of their ancestors. Probably they will survive; they may even be the saviours.

Yet there have been eliminations, more particularly in England. Some economic groups have disappeared. Others have been transformed. Many of these removals and transformations have happened during little more than the past hundred years, the century of expansion, the century of the development of mechanical power. The reasons for the disappearance of some and the transformation of others have an interest far beyond the mere fact, since they are related to the problem of our own survival. It is thus necessary, as a first essay, to look back to a time before the power-driven machine arrived.

The salient aspect of medieval secular economic life,

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compared with our own, is that small groups of men are, to the exclusion of other interests, busy about getting their subsistence in what amounts to isolation. Even when free, the greater number of families were attached to the soil. They were, for the most part, agriculturists, or combined agriculture with a pastoral economy; but even the skilled artisan, the smith, the carpenter, the mason, was in part a cultivator.¹ While the exactions of the Lord of the Manor meant harder work, the chief enemy was not man but nature. A wet harvest spelt hunger, possibly famine, since there was little if any prospect of obtaining remedial supplies from the outer world. This matter of grubbing a living from the soil shadowed and dominated man through many centuries. It created and formed the peasant type, which, though in England it is to all intents extinct, survives in the majority of European countries. Even in England there is a hint of the perpetuation of the peasant mentality in the freehold farmers who bought up land with their profits from the War of 1914-18, only to repent. The medieval peasant did not work in order primarily to sell his produce, but to grow his own food. His clothing, if he was rich enough to own stock, came from his own sheep's backs; the wool was spun and weaved by the women of his family. His dues to his lord, his fines, were paid in kind. If he brewed, his own barley furnished the malt. He was self-contained. Markets and prices had little interest for him. He sold and bought only when he had a surplus to his primary needs. Thus he was spared our

¹ H. S. BENNETT, *Life on the English Manor* (1937), pp. 66-7.

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contemporary griefs of booms and slumps. In eastern Europe, and in parts of France, Spain and Italy, he still survives, scarcely affected by the trade cycle which excites the economist and demoralizes industrial society.

It must not be presumed that, for these reasons, the life of the medieval peasant was either happy or prosperous. Famine sickness occurred at short intervals. Between 1066 and 1322, there are recorded forty-five years in which pestilence was sufficiently widespread to be noted by the chroniclers. The fourteen months' devastation of the Black Death of 1348-49 was succeeded in the next half century by five other major plagues, not to speak of famines, dearths and murrains. In each decade in the century from 1350, there were grave outbreaks of epidemics. Each successive century discovered its own peculiar new scourge, the fourteenth bubonic, the fifteenth influenza and the 'English sweat', the sixteenth small-pox. In the seventeenth century plague flitted to and fro about the country; there is scarcely a year up to the Great Plague of 1665-66 without a report of its presence in one or other locality. London, says Creighton,¹ had a continuous record of plague infection in its soil ever since the Black Death. Thus the medieval countryman, overworked, hungry, ragged, a prey to disease, had little pleasure from existence. Langland is not alone in asserting that it was no Golden Age. The most optimistic calculations make the growth of population between the Conquest and the Black Death of 1349 so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. 'The loss by

¹ C. CREIGHTON, *History of Epidemics in Britain* (1891), vol. 1 *passim*.

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death was so severe that it took over two years to add one individual to such a village community.¹ Children died young; and the manorial obstacles to free marriage were so complex that it must be believed that marriages were late rather than early; and the fertility period of women was in this way limited. Moreover, as Langland observed, the mercenary but unprolific marriage was not infrequent:

It is an uncomely couple, by Christ, as me-thinketh,
To give a young wench to an old feeble,
Or wed any widow for wealth of her goods,
That never shall bairn bear but if it be in arms.
Many a pair sith the pestilence have plight them together:
The fruit that they bring forth are foul words:
In jealousy joyless and jangling in bed
Have they no children. . . .

From all descriptions of medieval peasant life, one fact emerges which is borne out by all peasant communities of to-day. Since the first business is the provision of subsistence from the land, and only the surplus goes to market, there is a definite relation between the yield of the holding and the number of mouths to be filled, and a relation between the size of the holding and the number of hands available to cultivate it. There is for every holding an optimum population. Thus the family is all-important. With little freedom to move, with a comparatively late setting-up of new households, the medieval family was perforce the economic unit. So long as the available land was able to support the family, the family

¹ BENNETT, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-40.

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income, that is, its corn, meat, wool, etc., was shared by the family. If the holding was big enough to support the family and give a surplus, then the more hands there were to till the soil, the better. If the family increased beyond the size which the holding could support, it was only possible to increase the land by renting from the manor a piece of the waste, enclosing it and breaking it down, making what was technically known as an 'assart'. Thus the size of a peasant holding, to some extent, corresponded to the numbers and age of the family. It is thus that the pre-nineteenth century acquiescence in child labour was natural to the labourer. Indeed, it must be taken that in all peasant communities from the most distant of ages, the child worked, according to his or her powers, from the earliest possible age. He or she began with light tasks about the homestead, or crow-scaring in the fields, tending the pigs, and following the occupations which the traveller through, say, Andalusia will see with his own eyes to-day.

As much as for the man of the fields, the family was the economic unit for the craftsman. Few medieval towns were more urban than an overgrown village. The inhabitants were as much cultivators as artisans, and, to the smith, the carpenter, the mason, economy was based on the relationship of his family to his capacity for producing real goods rather than on his money earnings.

From this type of economy there rose not only the conception of a stake in the country and a dependence on the soil, but also its reverse aspect, reluctance to move. Men leave unwillingly the place where they get their

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living. When they abandon their house, it is by a process of ejection: it is not the attraction of the town that summons them to go. Those of the common people who moved were the landless. There was, of course, a certain normal movement. Technicians, such as masons, migrated; but such migration was frequently a matter of impressment, and to the job, just as seasonal labourers move to the season. There is no hint of migration in response to an offer of work and wages ('Hands wanted'), as would be found in our contemporary society. It would indeed be delusive to speak of wage offers. In this comparatively primitive society, money played an unimportant part. Cash payments occurred in manorial transactions; but even here by no means as a rule. Payments in kind, heriots, boon work, free privileges, and so on, took the place of money. Wages in the modern connotation were the exception. The development of 'truck' is not in the first instance an imposition forced on a helpless proletariat by a grasping employer, but the adaptation of a traditional custom to modern circumstances. It was only when the practice was abused, as, alike in agriculture and industry, happened in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, that it was associated with oppression. In the early seventeenth century, 'the remuneration of many shepherds, miners, fishermen and sailors was, in part or whole, of a kind which can hardly be described as wages'.¹ In the same century, 'in Derbyshire, and perhaps elsewhere, it was sometimes the cus-

¹ 'An Occupational Census of the Seventeenth Century', by A. J. and R. H. TAWNEY; *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, v, i (1934), p. 49.

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tom to make payments to charcoal burners and carriers in the form of bar-iron'.¹ Even in the nineteenth century, the shepherds in the Border country were paid in sheep and lambs, and allowed to herd their animals with their masters' flocks,² even as the Spanish shepherds had received their payments in the great days of the Mesta.

If then, we look at the medieval scene, we shall perceive that the majority of men are engaged in getting their living as semi-independent producers of the goods they require for their subsistence. Even as late as the seventeenth century the employee forms a small part of the community. A census of part of Gloucestershire shows that, even when the gentry is included, the ratio of employed workers to masters, independent owners and craftsmen is little over one to four, and that in individual industries it is much lower. 'Much labour on farms . . . was then done by men whose primary concern was with their own holdings, or by the sons of peasants who expected to obtain one.'³ To such men, movement except under pressure would be absurd, even suicidal. The holding, the family, and the family income form an indivisible whole; the idea is ingrained, and as will be seen, it persisted, certainly down to the latter half of the nineteenth century and even in some form to our own day.

¹ T. S. ASHTON, *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution* (1924), p. 107.

² *Rep. of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children*, P.P. 1843, XII, p. 375. Evidence of W. Hindmarsh of Wooller.

³ TAWNEY, *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, v, i, p. 48. 'The conditions of large parts of seventeenth-century England were, in fact, still semi-colonial. The result was that it was easy for the small man to get a holding; that wage-labour, being scarce, was in a strong position; and that since the largest group in rural society consisted, not of wage workers, but of peasant farmers, the critical issues of the day were those, not of wages, but of land-tenure and credit.' *ibid.*, p. 53.

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III

Yet it would be false to suppose that the open field system and the manor were unchanging.¹ Even before the fifteenth century, the most obscure era of English history, change was continuous. Peasants exchanged strips of land in order to consolidate holdings. Lords swapped manorial rights for money payments and rents, and enclosed land by arrangement with their tenants and neighbours. The bondman was freeing himself from servile tenures. If the main economic structure did not change very much, there was constant movement; but the movement was slow and not disruptive. The first change in the pace, the first distortion of the social framework, rose out of the dissolution of the monasteries in the thirties of the sixteenth century. It threw on to the market a considerable amount of monastic land with its appendent rights, which had hitherto been held in mortmain, that is to say, since a religious house was a corporation, it could never die and the estate could never come on the market. Much of this land was either sold by the Crown, or given by the King as rewards to his backers in this *Grande Latrocinio*, with a consequent orgy of speculative buying and inflation of prices. The final holders naturally bought at prices far above the value of the rentals (I include in the word fines on entry, etc.) so that,

¹ It is a commonplace that the manorial system was neither uniform nor universal. It has been employed here merely as a vehicle to convey the idea of subsistence production, which is common to medieval economy, and the idea of the family income, which is common to isolated communities.

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to receive the appropriate interest on his capital outlay, the final holder had to make higher profits than he could obtain from the average peasant. Some of the difficulties were solved by laying down arable to grass and grazing sheep for the wool which was the mainstay of the English export trade. Wherever this happened, the tenants were evicted. The alternatives open to them were either to break new land in the waste, or to take service. Thus the first true advance towards mobility of labour began.¹

It must be remembered that sixteenth-century England was, in Tawney's phrase, still a 'colonial' country, composed of settlements surrounded by areas of waste, marsh, moor and forest not yet claimed from nature. The enclosure of holdings in these settlements meant the eviction of tenants. The removal of the exiles either to colonize the waste, or in search of other holdings, meant a dearth of labour in the deserted hamlet. Moreover, the removals meant the dispersion of a hitherto settled people up and down the countryside; unregulated vagrancy. This nomadism conflicted with three powerful interests, those of the State, of the agrarian landowners and of the towns. It conflicted with the State's interest because the State required a settled people. Nomadism spelt discontent, the seed-bed of treason. Among a settled people, hands can be laid on a man at any time, either for service or for crime, and the provision of a national police system

¹ On the question of the number of evicted tenants and the areas involved, see R. H. TAWNEY, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1912), pp. 261-65. No figure can be given; but all contemporary evidence points to the fact that in certain parts the enclosure movement did depopulate even whole villages.

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can be evaded. Nomadism conflicted with the agricultural landowners' interests, in that it meant a shortage of labour at the important seasons of the year. Equally, it conflicted with the policy of the towns, in that to industry, being built up on the guilds, a narrow hierarchy of masters, journeymen and apprentices, a crystallized body working for a defined limited market, interlopers from the countryside were unwelcome. Thus a triple interest required the suppression of mobility. England was not yet ripe for the advance; the market was not yet ready to absorb a mobile labour force.

Moreover the danger from Spain increased the necessity of a strong economy. The Elizabethan domestic policy was subservient to this need. Hence arises an early attempt at *autarkie*, of which a part is the attempt to enforce permanent settlement by a series of acts against vagrancy, against enclosure and depopulation. The Elizabethan labour legislation from the Statute of Artificers (5 Eliz., c. 4) to the Poor Laws of 1598 and 1601 is a policy of labour conscription. The Elizabethan state with its development of domestic industry, its monopolies, its labour regimentation, is a primitive example of totalitarianism. It failed because social and economic forces were too strong for it. Its police system was weak, and its local governors were themselves part of the leaven of change. It failed chiefly because its technical equipment was not sufficiently advanced to provide a surplus which the State could appropriate without reducing the standard of living below the level at which the workers could live. The attempts of the first two Stuarts to maintain the

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Elizabethan system were defeated by the absence of a surplus, and in the last analysis the Civil War was the consequence of this absence.

The labour situation could not be stabilized. Parallel with the attempts of the paramount interests to immobilize the outcast, there was rising another group of interests, which would in the end break down the opposition. The sixteenth century witnessed the unobtrusive rise of highly-capitalized large-scale industry, which would require and could employ a mobile labour force. 'During the last sixty years . . . the first paper and gunpowder mills, the first cannon foundries, the first alum and copperas factories, the first sugar refineries, and the first considerable saltpetre works were all introduced into the country from abroad. The discovery of calamine, the ore of zinc in Somerset and elsewhere, together with the first really effective attempts to mine copper ore, made possible the establishment of brass-making and battery works for hammering brass and copper ingots into plates . . . The important thing about these "new" Elizabethan industries was that in all of them plant was set up involving investment far beyond the sums which groups of master-craftsmen could muster.'¹ Further, advanced technical methods were being introduced into older expanding industries, into coal-mining, into the metallurgical enterprises, while the growth of markets increased the size of the enterprise, both physically and in the capital employed in soap-boiling, salt manufacture, brewing,

¹ 'The Progress of Technology and the Growth of Large-Scale Industry in G.B., 1540-1640', by J. U. Nef, *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, v, 1.

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ship-building, and even in the finishing processes of the textile trade.¹ These expanding industries all required labour of specific kinds. In some cases technicians had to be imported from abroad; Germans came to the Keswick copper-mines; glassmakers came from Lorraine. But unskilled labour had to be recruited in England. The little evidence available points to the fact that isolated industries were hampered by a deficiency in labour. For example, about 1582, the proprietors of the Winlaton colliery were sometimes forced to close down parts of their mine for lack of men.² In 1568, the Cumberland copper works apparently obtained forced labour from the Earl of Leicester's works in the Midlands. In nationally important industries, such as fishing, a ready remedy was the impressment of rogues and vagabonds by the magistrates.³ There is ample evidence that labour in the mines was recruited from outside the locality. Thus, large-scale industry was perforce stimulating mobility at a time when other powerful interests were attempting to prevent it.

The solution of the conflict was precipitated by another and larger one. Society is never static. Impacts from without, internal shifts of prices for specific goods, changes in demand, changes in technique, and changes in ideas, all play the devil with the intentions of legislation. And legislatures, busybodies though they be, are never all-seeing or omniscient. The price revolution of the

¹ 'The Progress of Technology and the Growth of Large-Scale Industry in G.B., 1540-1640', by J. U. NEE, *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, v, i.

² J. U. NEE, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry* (1932), II, p. 148.

³ E. POWER and R. H. TAWNEY, *Tudor Eco. Docts.*, III, p. 241.

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sixteenth century melted the class structure. The squirearchy and the commercial class bubbled to the surface in the seventeenth century; their antagonism to the Crown led to the Civil War. When the war had passed, it was a new England. The exigencies of the armies had assisted the disintegration of the declining guilds, since the impressment of recruits meant the breaking of apprenticeship indentures. The breakdown of the central government had removed from the parishes the royal centralized control. The disbanding of the armies created a workless and unsettled community within the community, a group of nomads, possibly criminal, possibly disease-carriers, certainly undesirable in areas still untouched by modern influences. Moreover, in spite of the activities of the Privy Council, enclosure had continued in sporadic fashion and added numbers to the landless proletariat. The problem of vagrancy still remained. Unconscious, however, of the newer forces, the government attempted to solve the question by the ancient formula, and produced the Act of Settlement of 1661-62.

Apart from the question of vagrancy, the motives behind the Act are not very clear. Was it, one asks, a refurbishing of the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers, designed as much as an administrative as a police measure; directed as much towards the provision of labour as to the prevention of its mobility? At least one can see that the labour deficiency had not yet been made good. The Crown, for example, employed forced labour in the mining industry, and (says Mr. Nef¹) private owners

¹ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 149-50.

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may also have done so. He quotes the recruiting for the Northumberland coalfields of labourers from over the Scottish Border, and cites the case of prisoners in the Civil War being handed over to the Governor of Newcastle for work in the mines. Similarly, criminals in South Wales were pardoned on condition that they took work of the same nature. Professor Hecksher considers that 'without the law, internal migration would have been greater and would have followed more closely the demand for labour'.¹ This would appear a disputable proposition. In practice, the Act appears to have been employed chiefly against those who might 'come on the parish' and the bulk of its victims were not the active and employable, but the widow, the orphan, the aged and impotent. The journeyman, if unmarried, scarcely troubled the magistrates or the parish officers.² Given the normal, uneducated man's native reluctance to move into the unknown, the difficulties of transport,³ especially for men with families, and the fact that the news of a demand for labour might take many months to circulate to a neighbourhood where there might be a surplus, one is surprised that any long-distance migration at all took place. It is true that there was seasonal migration; but this did not involve settlement, and moreover, was not in answer to a new demand, but a customary movement.

¹ ELI HECKSHER, *Mercantilism* (Eng. trans. 1935), I, p. 299.

² See D. MARSHALL, *English Poor in the Eighteenth Century* (1926), pp. 164-65. In 40 years, the Cambridgeshire Quarter Sessions removed no more than 66 single men out of 532 persons. Similarly, of 62 removals from Dunstable between 1692 and 1766, only 10 were single men. In Middlesex, 1690-98, of 212, only 11 were single, 1699-1709, of 265, only 20.

³ In the seventeenth century, the journey from Manchester to London by carrier took eight days.

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Further, the ceaseless complaints of economic pamphleteers in the early eighteenth century, that the poor are lazy, idle and dissolute, that they prefer to 'lie on the parish' to seeking honest work, point rather to the inability than to the unwillingness of labour to respond to the offers of capital.

The very high rate of wages in London compared with that in Lancashire in the early part of the eighteenth century¹ must be interpreted as a strong demand for labour in the capital compared with the demand in the rest of the country. The later rise in Lancashire demonstrates that mobility was negligible and that labour was unable to respond in the terms asked. Until the labour force had been accumulated in sufficient quantities, there could be no mobility in any real sense.

Although little accurate is known of the density of population in the eighteenth century, certain established facts are evidence of a considerable problem of labour shortage in some areas. A predominantly agricultural area will only support a limited number of inhabitants. If an extractive industry is undertaken in the area, workers must be drafted in from outside. As was shown above, the mine-owners of the north-eastern counties had in the seventeenth century been compelled to recruit labour in Scotland. In Scotland the difficulty was overcome by the maintenance of a legal servitude which bound the workers to the coal-mine and the salt-pit for life. But this solution was only temporary, since, the conditions of slavery being known, further apprentices were

¹ E. W. GILBOY, *Wages in the Eighteenth Century* (1934), Ch. xiii and p. 220.

BEFORE THE GROWTH OF POPULATION not forthcoming.¹ Again, mill-owners, such as Arkwright, in the vales of Derbyshire, recruited, probably forcibly, such vagrants as passed their way. In spite of the development of Liverpool and Manchester, Lancashire, largely agrarian, could not furnish from within its own boundaries hands to spin and weave the cotton to which the climate was suited above that of any other county. The wage-rise in Lancashire between 1700 and 1800, and particularly after 1750, is evidence of a shortage, almost a dearth of labour. Wages do not advance at such a pace in an area without a motive. Cotton needed workers, and Cotton was prepared to pay them.²

¹ Preamble to 15 Geo. III, c.28 (1775), quoted by P. MANTOUX, *Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (1928), pp. 74-5, f.n.

² GILBOY, op. cit., p. 222.

	ANNUAL WAGES IN £ STERLING		
	London	West Country	North
1700	25	17.10	11.5
1725	27.10	17.10	13.15
1750	30	17.10	15
1775	30	18.15	22.10
1790	30	20	26.5

CHAPTER II

RAPIDLY INCREASING POPULATION AND THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED

§ I GROWTH OF POPULATION

As was shown in the previous chapter, England, during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, was handicapped by a lack of labour capable of response to the demands of capital. During the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, the handicap was removed; where there had been a dearth, an abundance appeared, even, as it seemed to some in the circumstances, a superfluity. For the country the effects were subversive, in that so sudden a proliferation raised problems which asked for radical handling, but which, owing to inexperience, lassitude and the prejudices of tradition, were only partially, and that empirically, solved, and which produced after-problems to be inherited by the twentieth century.

Part at least of the miseries which afflicted Britain in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century was due less to apathy and ignorance than to the uncontrollable circumstance of the pace of the increase. At no earlier time in the history of the world are recorded growths of population of the nature of that between 1801 and 1851. The situation therefore contained all the elements of

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surprise, and if Englishmen were incapable of handling the problems raised by it, they must not be too severely blamed. The pace beat them. The incidence of the first population problem is most easily expressed by the figures. In 1700, the population of England and Wales has been estimated to have stood at about 5.85 million; in 1750 at about 6.25.¹ That is, over a period of fifty years, an increase of 6.83 per cent. At the first census in 1801, the figure was 8,892,536, showing an increase since 1750 of 42.24 per cent.² At the census years from 1801 to 1871, the figures were as follows:³

<i>Date</i>	<i>Population in '000s</i>	<i>Percentage Increase</i>
1801	8,893	—
1811	10,164	14.3
1821	12,000	18.1
1831	13,897	15.8
1841	15,914	14.3
1851	17,928	12.7
1861	20,066	11.9
1871	22,712	13.2

No even partially reliable statistics exist before 1801, but there is no reason to doubt that down to the nineteenth century the birth-rate in relation to the adult population was always by modern standards high. Its failure to add to the population was due to an exaggerated death-rate, so high that in the great gin-drinking era of the twenties and thirties of the eighteenth century, it probably exceeded the birth-rate. The fall of the death-rate

¹ G. T. GRIFFITH, *Population Problems of the Age of Malthus* (1926), p. 6.

² *Census Report of 1851*, P.P. 1852-53, LXXXV, p. xxxiii.

³ These figures do not show the natural increase, i.e. the balance of births and deaths. There is included the (for the earlier years unknown) number of immigrants. Their inclusion makes no difference to the argument to be developed, since it is concerned with the real increase.

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after this period is agreed to be the principal agent in the increase of the population. The death-rate declined steadily; it reached a low level about 1760, rose again towards 1780, and then declined rapidly, reaching, in the decade 1811-20, the decade of the biggest proportional population growth,¹ the lowest point it was to reach for many years.

In the meantime, the birth-rate until 1841 remained high. In 1780, it stood at 37.7; in 1831-40 at 36.6. Between 1841 and 1850 it dropped sharply to 33.9.²

A rapid increase of population, while it may remove the handicap raised by a deficiency of labour, presents, even in the initial stages, a whole range of problems of a character even more formidable than the original handicap. The problems which face a society with an economy from a domestic point of view comparatively stationary, changing only to compromise with leisurely developments, are aggravated as soon as the pace of the development enlarges. It is easy to see that the difference between the growth of population of 1700-50, a mere 400,000, and that of 1750-1800, nearly 2½ million, must present in the latter period difficulties of a size and nature wholly alien to those of the earlier epoch. Summarized, the problems may be resolved as, first, the pro-

¹ Death-rates: 1781-90: 28.6 1801-10: 23.9 1821-30: 22.6
 1791-1800: 26.9 1811-20: 21.1 1831-40: 23.4

² Figures quoted from BROWNLEE's *History of the Birth- and Death-rates in England and Wales* (1916), by T. H. MARSHALL in 'The Population Problem during the Industrial Revolution' (*Eco. Hist.*, 1929). It would not be to the purpose of this essay to discuss the figures of the birth- and death-rates in the period. The whole question has been examined by Griffith (op. cit.) and by Marshall, who criticizes some of Griffith's figures. For the later period, see MARSHALL's illuminating 'The Population of England and Wales from the Industrial Revolution to the World War', in *Eco. Hist. Rev.* (1935), v, 2.

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vision of food and clothing for the increasing number of consumers; secondly, and at a later date, the provision of increased housing accommodation. Thirdly, deriving from these two, there is the question of organizing labour in such a way as to secure, from the increase in the factors of production, the greatest increase in the provision of the vital consumption and durable consumption goods.

Should the community fail to solve its problems, or be slow to carry out the appropriate policies — whatever the cause for such failure or delay may be — certain consequences are likely to follow. First, the new population will press on social conditions to an extent that there will be a fall in the standard of living. Secondly, if the necessary remedies are not applied, an increase in the death-rate may be expected. Did these contingencies befall Great Britain? If so, when did they make themselves felt?

§ 2 THE PROBLEM OF SUSTENANCE

Take first the question of sustenance. There are the alternatives of producing the necessary foodstuffs from the country's own soil and of obtaining a sufficiency from external sources in exchange for manufactured goods. The alternatives are of course not mutually exclusive; but owing to a number of coincident circumstances, the second alternative, which in view of the extent of the increase of population was inevitable, made its appearance earlier than was strictly necessary, considering the country's capacity of agricultural production.

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From the figures quoted in the section above, it will be seen that in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, conditions of some nature were causing the death-rate to rise, that is to say, the consequences of a failure to solve the problem of a rapidly increasing population had begun to be felt. We should expect, therefore, to find that, at some earlier period, a decline began in the standard of living. Did this occur? If so, when did it occur?

On a preliminary survey, it might be supposed that pressure of population on food supplies first began to be felt from about 1765. Up to that date, England had been an exporter of grain. After 1765, she became first an intermittent but frequent, later an almost permanent, importer. Moreover, grain prices through the second half of the century were on the average considerably higher than during the first half. The Corn Law of 1773, which prohibited export when the price of wheat rose above 44s. the quarter, registered a change of policy. Furthermore, in the decade of 1770-80, the number of enclosure bills laid before Parliament rose very rapidly.¹

Now, while it is true that corn prices, and therefore the cost of bread, were higher during the latter half of the eighteenth century, it will be found on examination that there is no evidence to warrant a belief that the rising price of bread was due to population pressing on the means of life. The rise in corn prices was due largely to the weather. Between 1765 and 1792, 'the yield

¹ Enclosure of Common Pasture and Waste.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Acts</i>	<i>Acres</i>
1727-60	56	74,518
1761-92	339	478,259

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of fourteen of the harvests fell so far below the average as to create scarcity . . . several others were defective; and . . . only two (1779 and 1791) were really abundant'.¹ The Act of 1773 was no more than the registration of the universally held principle of preventing 'grain from at any time being either so dear that the poor cannot subsist, or so cheap that the farmer cannot live by growing it'.² The enclosure movement is no more than the reflection of a number of contributory causes. It is true that after a gradual process of several centuries, the movement reached its peak in the period 1765-1812. But it was consequent not on the increase but on the transformation of the population. Towns, slowly growing in size, had become dependent upon a wider and wider area of the surrounding country;³ their dependence was eased by a slow thickening of the web of communications. The enclosure movement was a symptom of the change from a society still in the pioneer stage, in which each independent locality strives to be self-sufficient, to a community which is developing an embryo large-scale industrial system, concentrating its workers in towns and providing markets for agricultural produce. The growing market induces the farmer to increase his output in order to produce a surplus, and thus leads to a further development of exchange. The enclosure movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the result of the industrial growth of England over a long period.

¹ LORD ERNLE, *English Farming, Past and Present* (ed. of 1922), p. 268.

² C. SMITH, *Tracts on the Corn Trade* (1764), II, 72, quoted by C. R. FAY, *The Corn Laws and Social England* (1932), p. 34.

³ This, by the way, is one of the reasons given by Governor Pownall in introducing the Corn Bill in 1772 (*Parliamentary History*, XVII, 475).

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Had industrialization not taken place, it is possible that, given the improvements in medical science and the consequent fall in the death-rate,¹ England and Wales might have developed in like fashion to twentieth-century Poland, parts of which, owing to the minute parcellation of the soil, have been reduced to a state no better than that of an agricultural slum.

So far from any pressure of population being observed, during this time, it was the general belief that the population was falling, a matter of some alarm in that, according to 'mercantilist' theory, a large population was necessary to the prosperity of the country. In point of fact, the country, given normally good weather, was perfectly capable of supporting the population throughout the eighteenth century. Agriculture, both pastoral and cultural, was improving at a considerable pace; crops were giving larger yields; animals were increasing in weight. Although prices were rising, so too were wages. If there was a shortage, it was not due to an increase of mouths, but to bad weather.

The next period, 1792-1814, is characterized by high prices and by at least two serious crises, that of 'Speenhamland' in 1795, and that of the Luddite riots of 1812. It is also complicated by two extraneous circumstances. The first is renewed crop failure. Of the twenty-two wheat harvests, two only gave abundant yields: fourteen were deficient, and of these seven were really bad. The second complication is the war with France, which, ex-

¹ It is, of course, improbable that medical science would have improved without the presence of industrialization.

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cept for the few months of the Peace of Amiens, stretched over the whole period. The effect was to thrust forward enclosure. More than a million acres of waste and common pasture were brought under cultivation. But 'during the whole period, the total imports of foreign wheat over exports of home-grown produce only amounted to 1,661,000 quarters, or an average of little more than 59,000 quarters a year. It may, therefore, be reasonably assumed that, if England had enjoyed seasons as uniformly favourable as those of 1715-64, she would have been able to feed her growing population at low prices, and yet to remain a grain-exporting country.'¹ If Lord Ernle's generalization be coupled with the decline in the death-rate by more than 11 per cent in each of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, it will be difficult to establish that population exercised any pressure on the capacity of English agriculture to feed the four million mouths which were added to the population between 1791 and 1821.

Before 1815, the deficiency in the food supply can be attributed to bad weather and that lack of organization which had always existed. After 1815, on the other hand, governmental shortsightedness plays the major part. After 1820 the death-rate began to increase and reached its highest point about the end of the thirties. At least some part of the distress which occurred during the period was due to deficiency of foodstuffs among both the rural and the urban population. But such deficiencies were due less to any question of the capacity of English agriculture

¹ ERNLE, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

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than to the unwisdom of governments. The Corn Law of 1815 was designed to secure landowners in a dominant political position. Instead, it put the grain market at the mercy of speculation, and the subsequent ingenious compromises did nothing seriously to remedy the position. The political policy, coupled with the post-war deflation, reacted on agriculture. It was not until after 1837 that the farmer once more became capable of rising to the situation. Had policy been wise, the distresses of the twenties, thirties and forties need not have been what they were. In the sixties, with a population some 20 per cent higher than in 1841, England was capable of supporting five-sixths of the people from its own soil. It is true that many changes had taken place in the technique of agriculture since the accession of Victoria; but many of these technical improvements would have taken place earlier but for the failure of governments to appreciate the situation, and for their maintenance of a policy which, while claiming to protect the landowner and the farmer, in effect deterred them. Once the government's fetters on improvement were broken, agricultural production could, and did, flourish. In 1851, Britain, with a population double that of 1800, 'could have kept alive from harvest to harvest, even if she had lost control of the outer seas'.¹ Since the country kept that control, and since industry was able to exchange goods for foreign foodstuffs, there was, so far as nutrition went, no population pressure. 'Had some unthinkable coalition completely mastered the seas . . . Britain would have been

¹ J. H. CLAPHAM, *An Economic History of Modern Britain*, II, 9.

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forced to peace for lack of cotton, hemp, timber, sugar, tobacco, saltpetre, markets and empire, some time before she might have been forced to it by a shortage of meat or bread.¹

If then the population did begin to press upon the food supply, the earliest pressure probably began between 1815 and 1820 and was due to a mistaken government policy for agriculture. The Corn Law of 1815 was not conceived in the spirit of that of 1773; unlike the latter, it was designed not to preserve a balance, but to weight the scales in favour of the producer.² The 1815 law, coupled with the difficulties of post-war finance, hampered more than it helped agriculture, since it placed a premium on the production of corn to the disadvantage of other forms of production. The farmer thus clung to the one solid thing in an apparently dissolving world. In the twenties and thirties there were opportunities for capital to profit in farming from the growth of towns and population. Had the balance between consumer and producer been struck, it is possible that the age of high farming might have been anticipated by twenty years — with, who knows, what social and economic consequences to the country?

§ 3 THE PROBLEM OF HOUSING

The capacity of agriculture to supply is, however, only one side of the problem. Even had it been free in 1815

¹ CLAPHAM, *ibid.*

² Huskisson's Bill of 1827 attempted to restore the principle to what it had been in 1773. It was rejected.

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to develop on the lines conditions demanded, it could not alone have prevented the distresses of the next thirty years. The complexities of the problem embraced equally the questions of public health and the organization of industry.

The crises arising out of health and housing are familiar to every student of the history and literature of the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century. The misery of the towns touched in a like degree the imaginations of men so little sympathetic to each other as Dickens, Disraeli, Engels, and Chadwick. And in respect of housing and sanitation, there is no doubt that British society failed badly. In spite of the stir caused by Malthus and his *Principles*, in spite of the revelations of the censuses, there is little indication that the problems raised by the pressure of population on housing were appreciated. Until it was too late, the effects of the rise in numbers and of the transformation of a predominantly rural into a predominantly urban population were only imperfectly understood. The failure must be attributed to a number of causes; in part to the decay of local government and to the lack of well-organized central government departments; in part to the control of the legislature by landowners and their dependents; in part to a belief in a beneficent deity and the principles of *laissez-faire*. Yet to condemn the men of 1815-50 for their shortsightedness would be unjust. The relation between population and housing offers peculiarly delicate problems. Even with an almost stationary population, twentieth-century Ministers of Health, aided by fully equipped staffs of

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statisticians and experts, and by intelligent local bodies, have been only a trifle less ineffective than the legislators of a century ago. The difficulty lies in the fact that the problem constantly changes its shape. Not only are its factors the ever-shifting birth-, death-, and marriage-rates, but also it is varied by the economic conditions in each particular area of the country. If, for example, the age-tables of the present population of a town show that in five years' time a large number of young people will have become available for industry, the local authority will require to know whether industry can be expected to have grown sufficiently to absorb the new recruits. If industry can accept the new draft, there is the question of the relative numbers of males and females: will they marry and breed, will some have to depart, will recruits of the deficient sex have to be imported? If industry cannot absorb them, can they be taken on by an industry in a neighbouring town? Is there a town so close that they can daily go to and come from work, or must they migrate? Is it possible that the main industry of the town will be injured by some substitute, or eliminated by some new invention? If so, can some new industry be introduced to save the town? Is there a general inward trend of population in migration from some other area which is declining? On the answers to these and to many other questions hangs the correct appreciation of housing policy. Since houses cannot be built with the rapidity of paper cocked-hats, it is necessary that those responsible for the sanitation of an area shall be well equipped to foresee the contingencies which may arise. The study of

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the history of industry in an ancient town, such, for instance, as the textile trades of Coventry, will show how an industry can grow, be superseded, decline, make way for new industries, and then itself revive in different form; and the story of Coventry reflects the innumerable facets of the history of the country, even of the civilization.

Thus the problem of housing is, in any case, complex. It becomes infinitely more ravelled when, as happened in the early nineteenth century, the change in the number and character of the population comes with an unexpected and overwhelming rapidity. Even if the statistics lack accuracy, there is no reason to doubt that from 1820 probably, before 1830 certainly, living conditions in the majority of large towns worsened, that overcrowding prevailed and that in consequence disease increased and death came earlier. We may be sure that before the cholera epidemic of 1831, urban conditions were already bad. If one recalls that in consequence of the buoyancy of the birth-rate and the fall in the death-rate between 1790 and 1820, the proportion of young people was high, then the rise in the death-rate figures in the next two decades points to health conditions far worse than the crude figures indicate.

Indeed, it could scarcely be otherwise, if a small town in the process of rapid transition to a large city is considered. If in such a town there is no guidance and direction by a strong and imaginative municipal body, certain developments are almost inevitable. Industry, originally local, supplying no more than the townspeople and the neighbouring villages, will have grown up round the

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kernel of the place. In time, the manufactures will be extruded by the growth of commercial houses in the heart of the community; commerce, both by its financial strength and by its need for central and adjacent markets, will be strong enough to drive industry to a distance. As both manufactures and commerce develop, and the town grows in population and wealth, there will be a centrifugal movement of the wealthier classes towards the perimeter. Then, as domestic industry is gradually superseded by factory industry, there will be a setting up of factories in those parts where the working population is most closely concentrated. This in turn leads to a further extension of the commercial centre, which reacts to some extent — dependent on transport facilities — on industry. If industry resists the pressure, there will be a tendency for the kernel to grow upward instead of outward, and there will thus be closer density of population. In any case, there will be a natural pressure put on the wealthier groups to move farther out. Since, however, transport is as yet inadequate for long, rapid journeys, these groups move no farther than they must. Being the only group in a position to afford the costs of new residential houses, they settle down once more on the edge. It is for such that the estate developer and the building contractor spread their nets, while their abandoned mansions gradually become the tenements of the poor, and thus in turn industry is encouraged to settle down in the neighbourhood to obtain the advantage of a large stock of available labour. The poorer income-groups have been unable to move to the periphery, since in spite of the possibility of

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lower rents, it is vital for them to remain close to the centre of industry. Thus they are tied to the centre of industrial activity, and there is overcrowding. And with an as yet imperfect transport system, industry is bound closely to the main line of communication, that is, in the pre-railway era, to the river and the canal, the very areas most likely to breed disease, and round and in these areas gathers the proletariat. In all cities which grew to industrial and commercial centres in this period, the characteristic is invariable; the centre of industry and the densest population are adjacent to the port, river or canal.

In London, the commercial core is the City, round which industry grew up as close as may be to the Thames, and closest of all to the port. The homes of the wealthy were abandoned and became slums. The fringes were developed by the contractors. Between 1800 and 1840, the financier and the speculative builder, the Haldimanns and the Cubitts, erected for the well-to-do the massive squares and terraces of Bloomsbury, Belgravia, Bayswater and Islington. As these suburbs extended, they absorbed older village communities, each with their rich and poor quarters, and in turn debased them. This type of growth is but the first stage. The abandoned houses of the rich cannot provide all the lodging for the now prolific poor. It is at this stage that the jerry-builder arrives, the space-saver, the constructor of the back-to-back and the cul-de-sac court. 'I will explain the way in which the suburbs have sprung up,' says a witness from Bradford to the Select Committee of 1840.¹ 'An individual

¹ *S.C. on the Health of Towns* (1840), Q. 1598.

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who may have a couple of thousand pounds, does not exactly know what to do with it, having no occasion for it in trade; he wishes to lay it out so as to pay him the best percentage in money; he will purchase a plot of ground, an acre or half an acre; then what he thinks about, is to place as many houses on this acre of ground as he possibly can, without any reference to drainage or anything except that which will pay him a good percentage for his money; that is the way in which the principal part of the suburbs of Bradford have sprung up.¹ The speculative builder in turn attracts to the neighbourhood the poorer income-groups, who are again followed by industry; and these again expel the richer groups, whose houses decline to tenements.¹ The process is vicious and unending, and there are no means of control. Committees, always incompetent, often corrupt, existed for various purposes and were always at loggerheads. Government finance put a premium on building. The Window Tax remained until 1823, when the duties were halved; in 1825, houses with less than eight windows were exempted. The Inhabited House Duty was not removed until 1832, and then only after the resignation of a Minister; it was re-imposed in 1851. The Brick Duties were not abolished until 1850.² Such acts to prevent

¹ This is not to say that there were no enlightened landlords who placed restrictions on the speculative builder. But their efforts were local and not invariably successful. Lord Stamford was congratulated by the Committee of 1844 for his foresight in widening the streets of Ashton-under-Lyne; yet between 1838 and 1844, the average crude death-rate of children under one year was 296 per 1000. On the other hand, the jerry-builder was not so responsible as the society which permitted him. Had he not existed, there might have been no housing at all.

² It is perhaps delusive to attempt to interpret the figures of the numbers of bricks from the Brick Duty returns. It is noticeable that after a brisk three

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nuisance as existed — most of them were local — were directed only against the spread of fire. The Street Act, to provide standpipes in case of fire, was described by the Poor Law Commissioners in 1842 as ‘almost a dead letter’. It took the cholera and twenty years of lurid publicity to begin to discipline the ‘encamped hordes’ of Chadwick’s famous phrase. It took almost as long to drive into the heads of the educated classes that drainage, scavenging, paving, pure water, were necessities, and that these necessities could only be secured by the destruction of corrupt local bodies and by centralization. The lack of vision of Ministers of the Crown between 1800 and 1840 has been paid for by every subsequent generation.

§ 4 THE MOBILIZATION OF LABOUR

The sudden growth of population had caught the country unaware. The leaders of opinion had no experience and no reliable standard wherewith to judge so energetic a prodigy; and it almost appears that some found it better to ignore it.¹ Certainly the problem was never dissected. No one grasped — no one possibly could

¹ Brougham, in the Commons in 1812, declared the rise in population between the census of 1801 and that of 1811 to have been ‘more apparent than real’. The capacity of House of Commons lawyers for meaningless verbiage is not a phenomenon of the twentieth century.

years, 1838-40, the number of bricks made declines until 1844 when there is a revival to a new high point in 1847, followed by a big drop in 1848 and 1849. The high figures for 1846 and 1847 probably reflect the railway boom, and the same is probably the case for 1838-40. Certainly no conclusions can be drawn that the urban population as a result of the ghastly reports of the various commissions on public health, etc., was benefiting at all.

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grasp — that behind the immediate tasks of sustenance and housing, there was the real problem, that of the organization of the new labour force, of transforming it from many unconnected groups of human beings working in a traditional framework and rhythm, following a ritual, to a coherent society with a social purpose, working not merely for sustenance and shelter, but for some unanalysed purpose to be labelled non-committally 'Progress'. The country had need of both consumers and producers to take advantage of the technical changes the inventors and industrialists were making. The need was met. The traditional economy which required children as a working aid to parents found an ally in advancing medical science; a fast-growing market and a fast-growing labour force were both supplied. The problem which faced the industrialists was to mobilize the new labour force in such a way as to break down the tradition of work for no more than sustenance, a tradition which conflicted with the industrialist's need for constant and punctually delivered output.

Since the invention of the term it has been the convention to date the beginning of the Industrial Revolution from about the first decade of the reign of George III. But the change that the phrase implies, the transition from a system of domestic and customary industry is even to-day hardly complete. Omitting fashionable revivals, the handicraftsman is not quite obliterated from the economic scene; and up to 1914, many industries, long obsolescent, continued to flourish with remarkable vigour. In some localities the blacksmith and the wheel-

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wright still ply their trades in spite of the competition of the tractor and the lorry. The tailor and the shoemaker still fight a not unsuccessful rearguard action against 'The Man's Shop'. In the nineteenth century, many crafts survived in the country long after they had been driven from the city. The revolution was neither immediate nor wholesale. In 1830, while London was shared among the eleven great breweries to the extent that there appear to have been no more than seventeen houses not 'tied' to members of the ring, there were in Great Britain over 23,000 licensed victuallers who brewed their own ale.¹ In spite of the already heavy capitalization of the boot and shoe industry at the same date, much of the work carried out in Stafford, Nottingham, Northampton, and Wellingborough was that of outworkers from the factory, not only in the towns but in the outlying countryside.² The introduction of even the clumsiest sewing-machine into this trade was a new feature of the eighteen-fifties, and as late as the eighties, the outworker, although certain parts of the job were now taken over by the machine, was still, if with difficulty, maintaining himself.³ From such examples, the slowness of the growth of the 'Industrial State' may be judged, and the no less slow extermination of the handicraftsman. With him survived the mentality and philosophy of the domestic worker and the peasant, which, as will appear, have certain bearings on modern problems.

¹ J. H. CLAPHAM, *Eco. Hist. of Modern Britain*, 1 (2nd ed. 1930), p. 170.

² *ibid.*, 1, pp. 167, 169, and 181.

³ *ibid.*, II, pp. 94-5.

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Yet there is in this convention about the dating of the Industrial Revolution from the decade 1760-70 a certain relevance; for it is in the neighbourhood of this decade that we begin to see the final stages of the bringing into cultivation of the last acres of land suited to the purpose. In terms of the factors of production it is the completion of the accumulation of land. The pioneer epoch was passing; and its end gave the stimulus to labour mobility. Moreover, these years saw the beginning of the up-swing in the population, which would provide both the factor of production in the raw, and also a wider domestic market.

One subsidiary point, however, must first be made. Neither the accumulation of land, nor the mobility of labour would have availed much without a certain prerequisite, the freedom of commercial relations inside the country. That, to some, deplorable political transaction, the Union with Scotland of 1707, had turned Great Britain into the largest free trade area in the world. Not as the French, trammelled with local tolls, *octrois*, and other taxes on commerce, not, as the Germans, divided into more than two hundred petty states each with its customs frontier, the British had room for a wide and rapid development. In spite of a road and river system inferior to that of France, the difficulties which had to be overcome to get freer mobility were not the tenacious and irrational opposition of human interests, but the more pliable obstacles of nature. The opportunity was there, and in some measure had already been indicated by the insular

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position of the country. Coastwise traffic had aided the growth of the coast towns, while the hinterland remained comparatively undeveloped. The improvements in the Mersey, the Calder, the Trent, and the Derwent, in the first thirty years of the eighteenth century, led the way to the construction of canals, necessitated by the new uses for coal, in the last forty. The commerce thus bred, together with continually rising external trade, in due time led to the concentration of capital and thus its more rapid diffusion. Without the prior growth of commerce and the concentration of capital, the industrialization of certain of the inland areas after 1760 is not to be conceived.

The increase of available capital with the machinery for its effective employment in the shape of a banking system, was the engineer of the Industrial Revolution. Commerce, having put a comparative abundance of capital at the disposal of industry, required its reward in the shape of increased output. The problem for industry was the method of meeting the requirement. In the first half of the eighteenth century, industry was still, in the proper sense of the term, manufacture; and although already partially mechanized, still maintained, for example in textiles, a quasi-domestic system. To achieve a higher output, either one or both of two things were required. There must be an increased output on the part of labour, and/or labour must be technically helped to a greater productivity. The story of the technical advance through the long line of empirical inventions has been so often told that to recapitulate it

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should be unnecessary. Yet, since the early inventions were rather output-increasing than labour-saving, they, without an increase in the number of workers, would not have filled the demand.

The situation was changed by the growth of population. It was believed even at the end of the century that the population was falling. The reasoning was based on a series of unreliable figures and faulty assumptions; but with the irrational violence which sometimes affects legislatures, a bill for inquiry into the facts was rejected as 'presumptuous and abandoned'. As the figures given earlier show, the population was rising, and, after 1780, with remarkable rapidity. Thus, to some extent, the deficiency in labour was beginning to be filled.

(a) Redistribution of Labour

It was not, however, enough. To have a large population does not of necessity mean that it is well distributed. Even with the growth of population, there still remained the direction of it to the most suitable localities. As has already been remarked, no one is more tenacious of his home than the peasant, and the vast majority of the poorer classes were on the land. Although legally free to remove, such men were to many intents as fast attached to the land by economic ties as their forefather serfs. Their subsistence was derived in part from wages, which might frequently be in kind, in part from their own small holdings and the attached customary rights, in part from by-work. There was, too, always the hobble of the Settlement Laws to deter a man from

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venturing too far and from risking the loss of his sheet-anchor in old age, the poor-house. To induce such a peasant, naturally circumscribed in outlook, imbued with a quick fear of the unknown world beyond his boundaries, to remove from Dorset or Wiltshire to Lancashire, required a stimulus far more sharp than that required by a worker to-day. Wages meant little to him in comparison with the uncertainty of his future fortunes, and he preferred the poverty of the village he knew to the risks of what was to him as much emigration as a passage to the United States was to his grandchildren.

The conversion of this being, or his children, into a factor of production, responsive to economic demands, required time. First, he had to be uprooted. This was in part the human result of the enclosure movement of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. By the enclosures through which he lost his subsidiary common rights and possibly also his holding, he was prised off the land; or, if not he, at least his children, whom the progressive medical profession were saving. In a semi-colonial country of the type of early seventeenth-century England, it had still been possible for sons who survived to manhood to carve out for themselves a holding from the waste. The spread of the enclosure system in the latter half of the eighteenth century set an end to the pioneer period of England. If the peasant himself was not altogether driven off — and certainly an unknown percentage was — at least his younger children were never again able to grow their roots into their hamlet's earth.

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Nevertheless, even if uprooted, the young peasant was not mobile. Journeys across England could not be either easily nor rapidly undertaken. With no future and no knowledge, he drifted, to the nearest village, the least distant township, not far from his parish, where, if the worst befell him, he could at least find refuge. As Dr. Redford¹ has shown, automatic migration in the first half of the nineteenth century was still short and timorous. A man moved from a small village to a larger one; he or his children from the large village to a town; from a town to an industrial centre — a process of years, it might be of generations. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, migration was slow, indifferent, and purposeless.

‘The workers in a decaying branch of industry do not decide in a body that their occupation is gone, and that they must seek a livelihood elsewhere. They feel an ever increasing difficulty in maintaining their customary standard of living, and a few of the more enterprising may migrate to some rising centre of their own industry. The great majority, however, cling to their homes . . . Even when the last breath of a specialized trade has deserted an industrial town, most of the population may be retained inertly, offering through their low standard of living a temptation to the introduction of new industries dependent on low-grade labour. If this is true of an industrial population, it is even more strongly the case with an agricultural population.’² In this way, the

¹ *Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850* (1926), pp. 157-64.

² REDFORD, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

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proprietors of coal-mines in Cumberland recruited labour from the declining lead-mines farther east, in Durham from the dying linen-trade of the North Riding, in Lanark from starving handloom-weavers. It was not an attractive but an ejective movement. Until he was driven out, the labourer stayed where fate had left him.

In but few cases, especially in the eighteenth century, was movement long-distance. If one considers the transport system, it is not surprising. Not for the work-seeking migrant was the fast mail-coach, with (in 1830) its London to Edinburgh trip in $43\frac{1}{2}$ hours. At best he could hope for a passage on a barge on a river or canal, or, if not destitute, a perch on the carrier's wagon. It was a shorter and quicker passage from Liverpool to Dublin than to Birmingham. Had England by miracle possessed at the end of the eighteenth century a transport system capable of rapid carriage from place to place, the country to-day might not appear as squalid as it does. Urban concentration is not a necessity of industry, save in the extractive groups and at seaports. But England paid the penalty of being a pioneering industrial country. The concentration in towns was half complete before the Stockton and Darlington Railway was opened. Each area as it grew, attracted by slow means the landless man. The railways joined the points on the pattern the industrialists had already made. In Germany, at the time of the arrival of the railway, industry was still comparatively primitive and towns were small. They could build their railways to attract population. The English

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railways were cribbed in advance by a clutter of anarchic industry which had grown wherever raw materials or labour were easily available.

(b) *Adaptation of Labour*

Labour is a general term. It is an aggregate of individuals, each with his physical and spiritual peculiarities. It is one thing to attract a group of human beings to a certain area, quite another to attract the most suitable ones. The factory demands from the individual a certain discipline, attention, punctuality, dispatch. If the factory is power-driven, either by water or steam, the discipline becomes harder, for the worker is dominated by the exigencies of the engine, is held to a rhythm which may be wholly alien to his physical and mental being. The landworker, and equally the type of peasant-industrial worker, who was half craftsman, half farmer, was drilled to a different routine. His life moved with the cycle of the seasons. In summer, he would work long hours, in winter, short. Moreover, his work did not require the continuous concentration demanded of the machine hand. Time was less important than the job. One recalls George Bourne's tales of his workmen in the wheelwright's shop at Farnham at the end of the nineteenth century: 'Sometimes the grinding lasted too long — especially for a new tool, or for an axe. Cook was a terror in this respect. Time was no object with him; he must get his edge.'¹ But to the factory owner, time was money. 'It deserves to be remarked', says the enthusiastic Dr.

¹ GEORGE BOURNE, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (1923), p. 56.

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Andrew Ure, 'that handworking is more or less discontinuous from the caprice of the operative, and never gives an average weekly or annual product at all comparable to that of a like machine equably driven by power.'¹ And many of the new factory workers were drawn from these capricious operatives.

Nor was the agricultural labourer more suited to the job. 'They cannot become good weavers,' laments a silk-throwster of Coggeshall in 1831. 'They will spoil the work. We cannot make the agricultural workman into a ribbon manufactory to make saleable goods.'² Consider the statement of a wholesale shoemaker in 1840: 'They [the shoemakers] begin in the morning when they like; but if any mortal thing happen, up they are from their stools and after it: and sometimes they will go and spend their time drinking with an acquaintance; and, to make up for it, they will work sometimes till 11 and 12 o'clock at night.'³ From the point of view of the factory, the domestic worker was thus undisciplined and irregular.

Moreover, he refused to submit. If he was irked by the regularity of the hours, he preferred near-starvation and liberty. 'Learning from the inhabitants of a village a few miles from Belper, occupied chiefly by stocking-weavers, was in a distressed state from the depression in their

¹ *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (ed. of 1861), p. 333.

² *S.C. on Silk*, P.P. 1831-32, XIX, QQ. 6726-7. Evidence before Select Committees is frequently unreliable. The witness often has a highly subjective view to advance; at other times, he has something to conceal. But although the above-quoted John Hall appears to me, from the point of view of 1939, a mean spirit, he gives himself away so generously in other parts of his evidence, that he appears truthful.

³ *Rep. of Asst. Commissioner on Handloom Weavers*, P.P. 1840, XXIII, p. 281.

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wages, he [Strutt] invited a number of the most necessitous families to participate in the better wages and steadier employment of their great spinning mills. Accordingly they came with troops of children and were delighted to get installed in such comfortable quarters. After a few weeks, however, their irregular habits of work began to break out, proving both to their own conviction, and that of their patrons, their unfitness for power-going punctuality. They then renounced all further endeavours at learning the new business, and returned to their listless independence.¹ Though one may smile at the pompous indignation of Andrew Ure, it is easy enough to appreciate the truth of his story, and to comprehend the conduct of these rustic workers. Most of them, no doubt, had rented or owned small parcels of land, which they cultivated in the hours set by the seasons and the weather. They would move from their stocking-frames to the land, and back to their frames, their wives and children supplementing their work. But work at Strutt's factory — even though Strutt was, for his day, a model employer — demanded unremitting concentration on a machine. Until the power was turned off, or the next shift took over, there would be no running out, no relaxation. To men and women habituated to working in their own time, the change of environment was worse than death. They chose home and destitution.

So, in spite of the uprooting of the peasant-craftsman, in spite of the attraction of higher and regular wages, the problem of the supply of the appropriate labour had not

¹ URE, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-4.

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been solved. But the solution was found; the children provided it.

The various aspects of child-labour must be carefully distinguished. As has been remarked above, in peasant communities the child is always the fifth wheel of the coach, the supplementary pair of hands available for light and minor tasks, which would distract the pivotal worker. It had never been otherwise in England. 'There is no doubt that, long before the days of factory labour, children were employed in agriculture and in all forms of trade as cheap labour; they began to work at a very early age; they worked long hours; and a number were so engaged, proportionately as many, probably, as in the factories.'¹ What has never been sufficiently recognized is that the employment of children was not originally exploitation by the capitalist: capitalist exploitation was in fact an extension to the factory and to other concentrated industries of a form of training in work, which is natural to all primitive economies. In a society such as medieval England, in which the far greater majority of the population is illiterate, and where the struggle for subsistence is continuous, education takes the form of the practice of a craft, using the word in its widest meaning. As the obstacles to subsistence are gradually conquered, society extends its labours to other activities. If at that point invention has not found aids to, or substitutes for, labour, and, as in England, population has not grown at a pace commensurate with wealth, there is bound to arise the problem of labour deficiency. Hence comes the gradual

¹ O. J. DUNLOP, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour* (1912), p. 98.

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enlistment of both women and children, which is accepted, not only because the labour of women and children is customary in the more primitive economy, but also because the basis of the primitive economy has been the family income. The transition is gradual and almost imperceptible, so that by the time the exploitation, in its most pejorative sense, of children — which is so obvious in the eighteenth century — is established, it has become, if not acceptable, so much a part and parcel of the daily round of the hired worker, that his parental sense of injury is blunted. From the very imperfect evidence the line of the development of this form of labour recruitment can be observed in the coal industry. By the last quarter of the sixteenth century, there is evidence of labour deficiency in the Northumberland mines. Winton colliery had to close down more than once for lack of workmen. It was here proposed either to recruit labour from Scotland or to employ women underground. Apparently, resistance was made and was successful against the latter alternative.¹ Boy labour as carriers underground is recorded in the early seventeenth century in backward collieries in the Midlands and Somerset.² But with this exception, there is no evidence of the employment of either women or children in the mines in England³ before the Civil War. Women in the mines, however, were a common feature of coal mining by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

¹ J. U. NEF, *Rise of the British Coal Industry*, II, p. 148.

² NEF, *op. cit.*, II, p. 167.

³ Although it seems to have made, at least for women, considerable headway in Scotland.

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Similarly in other industries, women and children are recorded as working at various dates. For example, women are known to have been employed in the Tyne salt industry in 1634-35.¹ Children of eight worked in the blanket trade at Witney in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.² Of the iron foundries in the eighteenth century, Ashton writes:³ 'Women and children were employed in small numbers only, and their lives were not unduly strenuous.' At the Ecton Hall Copper Mine, 'small boys were employed in pushing wagons with ore; girls between 8 and 11 sorted the ore, and about 50 women were engaged in breaking it into small pieces'. In a Cornish copper mine of the same period, 4548 men were employed against 2648 women, girls and boys.⁴ The entry of women and children into industry was not universal in point of time, but diverse; it was dictated by the expansion of each plant in its own locality, which, owing to the immobility of labour, could not reinforce its working personnel. It was accepted by the workers with practically no resistance because from their customary experience the family was the working unit, which was supported by the family income. It was the development and expansion of industry during the eighteenth century which produced the worst and most appalling conditions, and in the end led to the elimination of children from industry.

Further, one must distinguish between the terms on

¹ BRERETON'S *Travels in 1634-5*, quoted by NEF, op. cit., II, p. 167.

² Quoted by DUNLOP, op. cit., from PLOT'S *Natural History of Oxfordshire* (1677).

³ T. S. ASHTON, *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution* (1924), p. 193.

⁴ H. HAMILTON, *The English Brass and Copper Industries to 1800* (1926), p. 323.

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which children were employed in the eighteenth century. On the one hand, there is the notorious apprenticeship of pauper children, 'Fatherless Children, Parish Apprentices and Hospital Boys', the combined result of the eagerness of parish overseers to lighten their ratepayers' burden and of the no smaller eagerness of rascally mill-owners to obtain a supply of cheap labour. On the other, there are the euphemistically termed 'free children' who were either used by their parents as assistants, or hired out by them to another worker or to a factory owner. In view of the habitual employment of children on the house and farm in peasant economy, it was considered that the parents who used, rather than employed, their children in such a state, would be tender enough not to tax the young beyond their strength. Equally, it became clear comparatively early that no such compassion would soften an under-capitalized and probably uneducated mill-owner, who had complete control of the child.¹ It was to the curbing of this type of master that Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1802 (42 Geo. III, c. 73), regulating the employment of parish apprentices in cotton and worsted mills, was directed; and although its implementation was carried out far from perfectly, it succeeded indirectly since it induced manufacturers to believe that such labour was not worth taking on. The State, in Dr. Clapham's phrase, 'had accepted liability' for these apprentices.*

Infinitely more important is the much larger class of

¹ There were, of course, model, even patriarchal, employers. Oldknow (see G. UNWIN's *Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights*) at Mellor exhibited the virtues of the best type of industrialist-cum-squire.

* CLAPHAM, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 372-4.

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'free children' with the employment of whom the State so long declined to interfere: and when it did, accepted responsibility in so leisurely and half-hearted a fashion that the investigator is led to wonder whether any British Government, Whig, Tory, Liberal, or Labour, has ever seriously concerned itself with future generations until too late. The free children were the descendants of forefathers who themselves had been used from as early a time as they could remember. Thus in the parents, the horror which the modern critic attaches to the employment of babies, was wholly absent. The parents merely carried on the tradition of which they themselves had been victims. It was merely an extension of the domestic system to allow the children to be employed out of their sight. 'The employment of small children [in spinning] was general', writes Heaton¹ of the eighteenth century, 'the parents being only too pleased to get their children to work, augmenting the family income by one or two shillings a week. Industrial schools and workhouses throughout the country devoted much of their time to teaching the arts of scribbling or mixing wool, and spinning. Defoe, Young and other writers noted with pleasure and satisfaction the prevalence of the practice of employing small children in these branches of industry.' With such a view of the child, it was impossible for poor parents to see the difference between the employment of their children in the family and their employment in capitalist enterprise, more particularly if they

¹ H. HEATON, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries* (1920), pp. 336-7).

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themselves were also employed in it, as in the Ecton Hall mine. It should be noted that these children were not apprentices, but hired workers, possibly contracted to the employer by their parents for a limited period of time. Apprenticeship of the type envisaged by the Statute of 1563 had long been obsolescent, although still maintained by certain skilled trades (its abolition was voted in spite of the opposition of the workers in 1814); and in any case it did not apply below the age of 14. Besides, the Elizabethan Act did not apply to industries which had appeared since its enactment, for example, upholstery, coachmaking, construction of patent locks, engineering; so that anomalies arose such as that quoted by Adam Smith: a coachmaker could not make wheels because wheelwrights were in existence at 5 Eliz., c. 4; but coachmakers not being in existence in 1563, the wheelwright was able to make coaches.

While the machine demanded from the worker not so much skill as continuous attention, it was exactly the latter that the adult worker from the country was unable to give. It was here that the child, not yet formed to habits, could be enlisted. Not only was it cheap, it could also be trained, probably by brutality, to keep its attention fixed. The child was taught not only to supplement, but eventually to supplant the adult worker.¹

Yet, even so, the supply of labour was imperfect. So long as a man, and therefore his child, was bound to the parish, the flow of labour trickled but slowly. In 1833, Lancashire, already hampered by the Factory Act of that

¹ URE, *op. cit.*, p. 23; and *S.C. on Silk* (*supra*, p. 59), QQ. 6489-6757.

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year, was eager for child labour to meet the return of prosperity after the crash of 1825. The new Poor Law, passed in the following year, knocked away some of the impediments to migration, and also by schemes to assist movement, improved the flow of labour from south to north. No longer able to feed his children by the aid of the parish, the poor man was driven to send them into industry, to form the proletariat of the future. All unconsciously 'the lively elves' of Dr. Ure's engaging fancy¹ were the instrument by which the craftsman was to be made a ghost of the past. The very slowness of Parliament to move in the matter of children's employment, the piecemeal, trade-by-trade rescue of the young and helpless from being broken to the factory, meant that on the closing of one avenue of child employment, another opened. The closing of the cotton-mills to children might condemn them to the mines, while release from the mines might spell the nailer's shop or the lace industry, or the potteries, the phosphorus match-maker's, or fustian cutting.

The sequence we have attempted to sketch in this chapter is that the accumulation of an adequate labour force, which did not begin until after 1750, was only the

¹ "The scene of industry, so far from exciting sad emotions in my mind, was always exhilarating. It was delightful to observe the nimbleness with which they pieced the broken ends, as the mule-carriage began to recede from the fixed roller-beam, and to see them at leisure, after a few seconds' exercise of their tiny fingers, to amuse themselves in any attitude they chose, till the stretch and winding-on were once more completed. The work of these lively elves seemed to resemble a sport, in which habit gave them a pleasing dexterity. Conscious of their skill, they were delighted to show it off to any stranger." *Philosophy of Manufactures*, p. 301. On p. 310, the intelligent author works out that these child-piecers only worked one minute in four; therefore, they were only busy three hours in twelve.

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first step in the development of an industrial state. Even when it was sufficient, it was, in the first instance, immobile; and mobility was only achieved, first, through the Enclosure movement, and later, through the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. (Even so, the trammel of the parish was only finally severed by the Union Chargeability Act of 1865.) Yet with partial mobility it was found that the adult labourer was inadaptably, first to factory discipline, and later to the machine. In consequence, the children, already useful for their cheapness, became even more desirable. These, in their turn, became the half-skilled labour force, which as the machine improved, became first quarter-skilled, and then unskilled, to form that desirable element, the factor of production. It has been necessary also to dwell on the fact that no government before 1844 formed any policy to deal with the deficiencies of distribution or housing, and that no government began to understand that there was a serious problem demanding central control in the rapid growth of population and its transformation from a rural to an urban society.¹

¹ In considering the theme of labour I omit considerations of capital. Capital, however, cannot be wholly excluded in dealing with the problem of a rapid and great expansion of population. It is clear that a growing and enterprising country requires capital in considerable quantities; otherwise it will be unable either to develop the resources at its disposal or to attract further labour and/or capital to its shores. But in 1815, the position of Great Britain was extremely peculiar. Under the stress of wars, it had become by a long way the leading workshop of the world. But foreign markets were either ruined by war, unable or unwilling to purchase, or undeveloped. Thus the best markets were, naturally, those which were also exporters of raw materials; 'the analysis brings out the predominant purchasing power of the raw cotton countries, the sugar countries, the favoured timber countries', says Dr. CLAPHAM (op. cit., I, p. 250) of the exports of 1830. Less naturally good markets were the new South American states which had managed to float loans in London round about 1825, and had thus acquired purchasing power. The trouble was that Great Britain required capital in vast

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quantities to use at home and to build up markets abroad. 'Between 1815 and 1830 at least £50 million had been invested more or less permanently in the securities of the most stable European governments, more than £20 million had been invested in one form or another in Latin America, and five or six million had quietly found their way to the United States.' (LELAND H. JENKS, *The Migration of British Capital* (1928), p. 64.) That is to say that the equivalent of about one-fifth of the interest on the national debt was going abroad annually. Whether this export of capital helped the British worker is arguable. In the long run it certainly did, in spite of the loss of much of the capital invested with the young South American republics. In the short run, it almost certainly did not. In any case, it was not a matter with which government judged it its business to interfere, and it did not do so.

In the post-war years, possibly until the fifties, Great Britain was forced to rely on her own capital for internal development. And in addition, she was finding capital for the development of other countries.

CHAPTER III

THE DELIMITATION OF LEISURE

THE 1830-48 period was an age of elimination. In the confusion of the Reform Bill riots, of the agricultural labourers' revolts, of the Chartist insurrection, it is difficult to disentangle the threads and to follow the destiny of each element in the skein. By 1850, it is possible to determine which strands have run on, and which will shortly be or already have been broken off.

During these two decades, actions were taken which would liquidate much that was hampering the growth of industry; and by the end we can perceive that the shadowy framework of an industrial system is descending on a country which is still almost medieval in social mentality. If one had to choose a single instance to differentiate the pre-1830 from the post-1850 period, none could better exemplify the change than the introduction of a fixed price for goods in the London retail shops in place of the old time-honoured custom of chaffering until purchaser and shopkeeper had come to terms. In that simple revolution of custom, the transition from a traditional to a rational economy is perfectly conveyed.

While the Industrial Revolution had had its beginnings in the eighteenth century, its first phase was far from com-

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plete by 1830. Mechanization had not yet reached the point when industry could in any way dispense with manual labour. At the beginning of the thirties, steam power was operating only in a minimal number of factories, and those almost wholly in the cotton industry. All that had so far happened was a partial concentration of workers in localities suitable for the further exploitation of labour. Except in large-scale industry and in a comparatively few light industries, the domestic system was still the ordinary feature of manufacture. Agriculture was still based almost wholly on the experience of generations. From the teaching and example of the illustrious men of the past, Tull, Bakewell, Young, Sinclair and Coke, the majority of farmers had learned little. After the slump in prices which followed the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, the small farmer, the 100-300 acre man, many of whom, during the war years, had either bought land or rented farms beyond their capacity and their capital, was unable to recover. Without capital to spend either on drainage or manures, he was unable to reconstruct or to change his methods. He had to rely on his corn crop, in which he was protected by the State, and this protection was one more deterrent to modernization. At the same time, the Old Poor Law, by giving him some reservoir of cheap labour, held him back from expenditure on such machines, threshers and tedders, as were available. Custom still ruled the land; that custom, 'which by the perpetuation of other causes becomes a cause in itself, is not without authority in determining the degree and manner in which the kind of labour is

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applied'.¹ Even as late as 1851, Sir John Caird was protesting against the inefficiency and slovenliness of the greater number of English farmers.

Similarly, coal mining — with the exception of the Davey lamp, invented, be it recalled, at the request of the miners, and not of the owners — was employing with small modifications the technique of a century back, as is witnessed by the Report of 1842. Even in the most progressive industry, textiles, the greater proportion of labour was still manual. In the early thirties, there were still upwards of 200,000 handloom-weavers competing with power-driven machinery.²

In no case was there a readily accessible body of scientific knowledge to which resort could be made. Both industry and agriculture were empiric. Thus England of the thirties was neither an agrarian nor an industrial state. It was neither wholly traditional nor wholly

¹ *S.C. on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, P.P. 1843, XII, p. 133. The domination of custom is exemplified in the comparison of different areas in Kent and Surrey. At Tunbridge Wells, women were not employed in opening the hills in the hopfields, but they were at Maidstone and Farnham, but again in different ways. In some places, women did not bind the corn, but only made the bands; in others, they bound.

² G. H. WOOD, 'Wages in the Cotton Industry', Sec. 1, *J.R.S.S.*, Jan. 1910.

<i>Numbers:</i>		<i>Power-weavers</i>	<i>Handloom-weavers</i>
1815		7,000	200,000
1819-21		10,000	240,000
1829-31		50,000	225,000
1832		75,000	
1833			250,000
1844-46		150,000	60,000
1859-61		203,000	5,000-10,000
<i>Wage-levels:</i>		<i>Factory Operatives</i>	<i>Handloom-weavers</i>
1806		121	200
1816		126	200
1826		118	103
1836		117	75
1846		119	75
1856		126	75

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scientific. It was at the frontier of an immense change, from which it was too late to draw back. Nevertheless, the past had still a grip on many: interests which had been built up in the course of centuries were still strong enough to resist: and at the back, there was the normal psychological resistance of man to change of any kind.

It is this conflict of the past and the future which blurs the lines of the reorganization of the thirties and forties. Electoral reform, municipal reform, Poor Law reform, factory and health reform, international trade reform, most of it embryo, much of it ill-considered, cut across all the previous alignments, and produced confusion. The revolts which were the reply, the Reform Bill agitation, the agricultural labourers' riots, the serious beginnings of organized trade unionism, Chartism, the Anti-Corn Law League and the Ten Hours movement (not to speak of more decorous and more effective opposition, such as the blackmail applied by landowners to the railway projectors), were in fact the reply of divergent interests only in alliance because they did not recognize where their own interest lay. There is a further blurring of the lines because to some extent the waves of revolt coincide with the downward movements of the price curve; prices fell in 1833, rose slightly and jerkily to 1839, fell abruptly to 1844, rose to 1847, and then fell again. All groups affected by the price falls thus became to some extent allies, whereas many of them were in fact naturally opposed. Again, another factor carries with it a certain distortion. In later periods of this nature for example, 1873-96 and 1931-35, owing to the fall of prices, the

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standard of living of those who remain in work has, as a rule, improved. Even in the face of wage-cuts, real wages have risen. This is not characteristic of the 1830-48 period, because a great number of the workers were still domestic and piece workers; they were not dismissed as was the factory worker, but suffered instead a considerable diminution in their remuneration. (The extreme case is that of the weavers of Ashton-under-Lyne, where 483 families were found to earn no more than 4s. 11½d. per family per week.) The problem then is less one of unemployment than of a subsistence wage. The handloom-weaver, the stocking-frame-knitter, the shirt-maker, the hatter, the shoe-maker were piece-workers rather than employees; and the problem for them was less to find work than to receive a reward adequate to their needs. It was a problem of subsistence.

All this will be seen more clearly if the component elements of the Chartist campaign are analysed, and the disintegration of the movement examined. In its origins it was a theoretical political movement, the project of the London Working-men's Association, founded in 1835. This association was formed by a group of sober-minded and intelligent skilled workmen with a vision of a possible England, men such as Hetherington, a printer, and Lovett, a cabinet-maker. It was inspired by a somewhat nebulous socialism, based on Owen's doctrines. It looked for success through the education of working-classes and through the equal franchise. Politically it was moderate and not revolutionary. Through Place, it was drawn into temporary alliance with the advanced Radicals, Hume,

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Wakley and Harvey, and also with Roebuck and O'Connell. Out of these two groups, the idea of the Charter (manhood suffrage — the ballot — abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament — payment of members — equal electoral constituencies — annual elections) was born. Their missionary activity in the provinces led to the foundation of other Workingmen's Associations in the provincial towns. Their activity stirred up a number of other semi-moribund associations, including the once-active Birmingham Political Union of Attwood. But there were from the earliest, two wings, an evolutionary and a revolutionary. The latter, after the difficult passage of the Glasgow strikes and the government's anti-Trade-Union attitude, broke away as the Democratic Association, under the leadership of O'Connor. Add now to these already divergent organizations, the whole of the anti-Poor-Law movement of Oastler and J. R. Stephen, and a mystical Babeuviste revolutionary movement headed by Bronterre O'Brien, and something of the discordant elements which regarded the Charter as their own may be perceived. The seeds of disintegration were there from the beginning. All these self-seeking allies wanted the Charter, because each saw in it the way to the execution of its own policy. But between the policies there was a fundamental cleavage. The more violent and revolutionary elements were root-and-branch opposed to the Poor Law; the progressive and radical elements were favourable to it. Hence when the price of bread rose from 7d. in 1835 to 10d. in 1838, and stayed there through 1839 and 1840, the Chartist movement was

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ripe for splitting by any organization whose policy was to solve the problem of subsistence. The organization was at hand. The London Anti-Corn-Law Association of 1836 was followed by the Manchester Association of 1838, and their fusion in 1839 as the formidable Anti-Corn-Law League, led to the gradual seduction of the moderate Chartists from the cause. How little the Charter was regarded as an end by the different elements of the movement may be exemplified by the fact that O'Connor could attack one advocate who was in favour of both the Poor Law and universal suffrage, and support another, who opposed the Poor Law and would have nothing to say to the suffrage, while Cobden's Free Trade movement was completely opposed to O'Connell's views as a Protectionist. By the autumn of 1839, Chartism was virtually dead as a general movement. There remained nothing but the revolutionary groups whose rising and violence were evidence of defeat.

Chartism was never popular in the south of England. In this unindustrialized area, what revolutionary tendencies there had been were dissipated in the agricultural riots of 1830. The courage of the rioters was damped by the fate of George Loveless and his companions. Scotland was moderate. The main centres of Chartism were round the Midland towns, and the clothing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and in Wales. But the movement was in no way territorially influenced. Even in these areas, there were thousands who held aloof. By 1839, in the time of violence, the main body of Chartists was drawn from the miners of the north and west, the stock-

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ing-frame-knitters of Nottinghamshire and Leicester, the silk-weavers of Spitalfields, the handloom-weavers of Lancashire and Yorkshire. For the abstractions of Chartism they cared little or nothing; they wanted a living. Hence rose the demand among the hosiers and weavers for the minimum wage, a demand which, had it been implemented by Parliament, would have led to no more than a faster mechanization of the textile industries.

Chartism was never a socialist movement. The nearest to socialists were the London Working-men's Association, who were moderate and philosophical. O'Connor, the leader of the revolutionary movement, was an individualist. Owen, the founder of English socialism, was anti-Chartist. The unions only came into the movement because they believed their existence was threatened by the government. When that danger was passed, they withdrew. They held aloof during the abortive risings of 1839. 'Never', wrote O'Connor in 1846, 'was there more criminal apathy than that manifested by the trades of Great Britain to the sufferings of those men.'¹ Why did the unions hold back? The answer is given by Elie Halévy. 'Those who earned thirty shillings cared nothing for those who earned fifteen, and the latter cared little for those who earned five or six shillings. Like the middle-class, the working-class had its aristocracy.'² If one glances at the wage-curves of the leading skilled trades³

¹ *Northern Star*, Aug. 24th, 1846, quoted by the WEBBS, *History of Trade Unionism* (ed. of 1912), p. 160.

² ELIE HALÉVY, *History of the English People*, III (trans. of 1927), p. 329. Halévy's analysis of the elements of Chartism, pp. 327-30, is more illuminating than that of any other writer.

³ A. L. BOWLEY, *Wages in the U.K. in the Nineteenth Century* (1900).

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between 1830 and 1848, one perceives that in the London building trades, in practically all the engineering trades, in the printing trade, wages have rarely declined, and in some cases have even increased.

The Chartist movement was a coalition of divergent interests, at a cross-road in time, before each went its own way. The only similarity between them was that — to borrow an idle phrase of to-day — they were all ‘have-nots’. Some, such as the London Working-men and the Unions, represented the immediate future; they deserted the political slogans for more tangible ends. Of others, the miners, for example, the future lay thirty and forty years ahead. The mass, who remained faithful, were the representatives of the past, the trades due for liquidation, the medievalists. Had the enclosure movement not already eliminated the peasant there might have been joined to these a body of agriculturists as determined as the French peasants of 1789, and society might have been shaken, the Anti-Corn-Law League defeated, and the subsequent history of this country would not have been as it was. But the peasant had been eliminated. The agricultural group in the country now was an interest merely of landowners and tenants. By the enclosure movement these — the most outstanding example of Georges Dandins in history — had destroyed their army, and become a mere cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers with no reserves to enlist. Against the industrial interest, they were powerless.¹ The future

¹ It is an ironical comment that to-day the Ministry of Agriculture, which should be the peer in any defence scheme of the Treasury and the War Ministries, is regarded as a second-grade office, and appears to be the Whinny-muir of

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lay with Cobden and the League. The worst the landowner could do in the future against the industrial interests would be in alliance with the Radicals, and that action would do no more than hasten a result which the aware onlooker could have said was inevitable. When the industrialists put through the Repeal of the Corn Laws on the momentum originally generated by the opposition to the New Poor Law and by Chartism, the landowners could only revenge themselves by championing the introduction of the Ten Hours Day.

While the manufacturers through the Anti-Corn-Law League were bringing their campaign to a triumphant conclusion, they were unwittingly contributing to their own defeat over hours by the factory workers whom they professed to be helping. For, if the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the other amendments to the tariffs, lowered the cost of living to the worker, the factory-hand, so long as he was a piece-worker, could obtain a sufficiency by working shorter hours. Thus, in their efforts to distract, at the expense of the corn-growers, an insurrectionary underpaid working-class from demands for higher wages, the industrialists were impaling themselves on the other horn of their dilemma by making it possible for the operatives to work shorter hours. The battles over the Charter and the Repeal of the Corn Laws have made such a stir in English history, that the quieter but no less intense battle for the shorter working day has always been some-ambitious politicians. ("To Brig o' Dread thou com'st at last!") We are far from that Committee of 1833, who wrote that 'the protection given to corn, the Growth of the United Kingdom, may be justly considered as an insurance against Famine, and against the danger of that reliance on Foreign Countries for the Staff of Life'.

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what obscured by the more violent movements. In reality, the Ten Hours Act is by far the most important landmark in nineteenth-century social history; its effects, as will be shown later, were far beyond those envisaged either by its champions or its enemies.

The motives which lie behind the movement for the ten hours day are popularly ascribed to a wave of humanitarian revolt against the employment of children in factories, unhealthy and disgusting, during long hours, and against the cruelties they suffered under their task-masters. Such sentiments no doubt influenced many upper and middle-class persons to sponsor the Bills which were regularly laid before Parliament over the thirties, forties and fifties, and in the sixties undoubtedly led to the final elimination of the very young from labour. But the movement had its origin among the workers themselves; and it is doubtful if more than a small proportion of them were activated by humanitarian sentiments. Because this movement was to affect the whole rhythm of English social and economic life up to our own day, it is necessary to examine its origins and to observe the change in the workers' attitude to the length of the working day between 1830 and 1850.

In the first place, the Ten Hours Movement was almost wholly confined to the textile industries, cotton, wool and worsted, and silk, and to two adjoining counties, Lancashire and Yorkshire, the main seats of these industries. In the second place, it was limited to the factory personnel; it had, and could have, no interest for the hand-loom-weavers and other domestic workers. Other

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industries apparently remained unaffected, for reasons which will be touched on later. The movement arises out of the increasing organization and mechanization of the textile trades, in chief of cotton, with a consequent rise in the numbers of factory employees. In 1834-35, there were 25,000, possibly nearly 29,000 h.p. of steam in Lancashire and Cheshire. By 1838, another 15,000 h.p. had been added.¹ According to the accepted estimates, there were, in 1832, in the cotton factories, 133,000 engaged in spinning, and 75,000 in weaving. By 1844-46, the spinners had 190,000 operatives, the weavers, 150,000.² Payment was made partly by time; but the great majority, especially the dominant skilled workers, were on piece-rates. It is impossible to establish any general wage-rate, since the price-lists varied from locality to locality. (Uniform lists appear to have existed inside each area, but to have been established at different dates, e.g. in the Manchester area from about 1831, in Bolton from 1844, in Preston and Blackburn not earlier than 1853.³) From 1826-46 the hours were approximately 69 per week, an 11½ hour day. Workers, however, were affected by short-time, as to the incidence of which no precise evidence is available; but in bad times, such as occurred in 1842 and 1847, it was severe.

Under such a regime, the Ten Hours Movement came to life. The reader of the many contemporary accounts of the incidents of the movement, such for example as

¹ CLAPHAM, *Eco. Hist. of Modern Britain*, 1, p. 442.

² 'Wages in the Cotton Industry', by G. H. WOOD, *J.R.S.S.*, 1910, 1, p. 594.

³ WOOD, loc. cit., p. 39.

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that of 'Alfred',¹ would be persuaded that the movement was a revolt of an infuriated body of workers against the crucifixion of their children, and that, as so rarely happens, for once justice triumphed. Justice, however, in real life, is only successful if the just are strong enough to overwhelm opposition. Charming as a morality, the story of a children's crusade holds very little water. In truth, the Ten Hours Movement was successful for other and more potent reasons, and the adult operatives were moved to intensive action because they were fighting for an object in which they themselves were personally interested.

One clue to their motives is given in the fourth paragraph of a resolution passed at a public meeting in Leeds in 1831.² 'A restrictive Act would tend materially to equalize and extend labour, by calling into employment many male adults who, though willing and ready to work, are obliged, under the existing calamitous system, to spend their time in idleness, whilst female children are compelled to labour from ten to sixteen hours a day.' The policy here set out is perfectly clear. The operatives' object is to draw into employment the reserve of unemployed adult males, thus taking off the labour market superfluous labour, which depresses wage-rates. In 1833, E. C. Tufnell, one of the Commissioners sent round to collect evidence — it must be admitted that Tufnell was in favour of child-labour — denied that humanitarian motives influenced the workers: 'The demand for the

¹ i.e. S. KYDD, *Hist. of the Factory Movement* (1857).

² *Leeds Intelligencer*, Oct. 29th, 1831, quoted by B. L. HUTCHINS and A. HARRISON, *Hist. of Factory Legislation* (1911), p. 48.

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Ten Hours Bill exists almost wholly among the working spinners, who are the chief supporters of the cry about the inhumanity of employing young children in the factories, and the narrators of the cruelties practised upon them, which cruelties, it appears, if practised at all, are only practised by themselves.' The employment of children, he alleged, was only the 'public and parliamentary grounds', the real grounds being that the operatives thought they would get the same wages for less work.¹ No doubt Tufnell, always extreme, exaggerated. The Short Time committees were composed of all grades of factory workers, and moreover he had been talking to the employers. But his contention is to some extent reasonable, and is further supported by the fact that in 1837 the operatives' committees were prepared to *extend* young children's hours — shortened by the Act of 1833 — from 9 to 10 hours, provided they could obtain the reduction of all other workers' hours to the same figure.²

The history of the fight, with its varying fortunes, over the Ten Hours Bill in its numerous shapes and forms between 1831 and the Bill (Ashley's and Fielden's) which became the Act of 1847, has been frequently written, and to recapitulate it would be supererogatory. What is relevant to the story is the change which took place in the intervening years in the operatives' attitude to the question of the length of the working day. By 1847, the children have faded into the background. Their labour had

¹ *Factory Inquiry Commission, Supp. Rep.*, Pt. I, P.P. 1834, XIX, p. 195.

² CLAPHAM, *op. cit.*, I, p. 574.

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been nominally regulated by the Act of 1833,¹ although as every observer knew, and every factory inspector reported, the provisions of the Act were evaded. It is true that the half-time system was introduced for children by the Act of 1844; but the importance of this Act lies in the fact that the hours of young persons from 13-18 were extended to cover women. This move to extend the Act to women was a subtle stroke, because women over 13 years of age formed about 55 per cent of the personnel of the textile factories, while adult men formed only about a quarter. By reducing the hours of women and young persons, the men were to all intents limiting their own hours to the same number. It is clear then that by 1844 the promoters of the Ten Hours Movement were interested in it less for the original reasons than for the benefit to themselves of the shorter working day. In the Act of 1847 the children were wholly omitted, and their working day was not in fact limited until the Act of 1853.

¹ The following are the relevant Factory Acts:	
1833 (3 & 4 Wm. IV, c.103)	Forbade employment of Children under 9 in textile (except silk) mills. Limited hours of Children under 13 to 9 hours daily, 48 per week; for Young Persons, 13-18, to 12 hours a day, or 69 per week. Day, 5.30 a.m.-8.30 p.m. Four travelling inspectors appointed.
1844 (7 & 8 Vic., c.15)	Introduced half-time system for Children to work 6½ hours daily, or 10 hours on 3 alternate days. Women to work the same hours as Young Persons, 12 daily, 69 per week. Day, 5.30 a.m.-8.30 p.m. Saturdays - 4.30 p.m.
1845 (8 & 9 Vic., c.29)	Act of 1844 extended to Print works.
1847 (10 & 11 Vic., c.29)	Hours for Young Persons and Women reduced to 11 daily, 63 per week from July 1st, 1847; to 10 daily, 58 per week, from July 1st, 1848.
1850 (13 & 14 Vic., c.54)	Hours for Young Persons and Women to be 10½ daily, 60 per week. Day, 6 a.m. - 6 p.m., or 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., Saturdays - 2 p.m. 1½ hours allowed for meals.
1853 (16 & 17 Vic., c.104)	Limits of 1850 Act day extended to Children.

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1847 itself was a bad year. Owing to the crisis, short time was in operation. In some areas the mills were only working seven or eight hours a day; in others, the masters were able to enforce a reduction in wages, which was not recovered until 1853. Nevertheless, the attempt of the manufacturers to have the 1847 Act reversed was resisted and defeated. Leonard Horner, the factory inspector, examined a large number of workers in 1848 and found that 70 per cent of them were in favour of the ten hour day. 'The opinions of several men working 12 hours were taken . . . many of them said they would much prefer working 10 hours for less wages, but that they had no choice',¹ (i.e. no man could risk his job by rebelling for reduced time, since there were plenty of unemployed to take his place). On the other hand, Horner found some men who were willing to work longer hours, for example, one who complained that wages were so low, he could hardly earn 7s. a week, and would therefore rather work 12 hours to make more money.²

Thus, while the attitude in 1833 had been that the men wanted the children removed from the factory in order that surplus labour could be taken on, and wage rates maintained, the attitude in 1847 was that they wanted the extra leisure the ten hour day would give them. In seeking the explanation of this change, it is necessary to glance back over the history of the factory worker.

The earliest factory workers were by no means townsmen, nor was early factory work year-end to year-end

¹ *Reps. of the Inspectors of Factories for . . . the Half-year ending 31st Oct.* 1848, P.P. 1849, XXII, p. 147.

² *ibid.*, p. 159, No. 55.

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without relief. A mill-owner of the eighteenth century at times combined agriculture with textiles. When business was slack, Oldknow turned his men out to do field work. Other masters closed their mills during the harvest and haymaking seasons, and put their employees to these tasks. Thus the factory workers retained their rural mentality, which even the growth of the town was slow to change. For the English towns, especially those which grew so rapidly in the nineteenth century, were in reality no more than overgrown villages. In addition to his countryman's mentality, the town worker maintained also the countryman's standard of living, and the attitude of the normal natural man to the task of earning his subsistence. 'Through all the length of life, resting is easier than movement; there is economy of energy, which, other things being equal, makes for survival . . . So long as the adaptation of the organism to its surroundings is maintained, it may continue unchanged for whole geological periods.'¹ The outworker and the piece-worker were content as soon as they had earned enough to satisfy their immediate needs. At the appropriate pound of coal or inch of cloth, they stopped; and that is the negation of a system which depends both on the regularity and increase of output. It was not without reason that the Manchester manufacturers told Arthur Young in 1771 that they preferred the cost of living to be high. 'In general, all these branches [of the cotton industry] find that their best friend is an high price of provisions. I was particular in my inquiries on this head, and found the sentiment uni-

¹ J. MURPHY, *Primitive Man; his Essential Quest* (1927), p. 26.

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versal. The manufacturers [i.e. the operatives] themselves, as well as their families, are in such circumstances better clothed, better fed, happier and in easier circumstances, than when prices are low; for at such times they never worked six days in a week; numbers not five, nor even four; the idle time spent at alehouses, or at receptacles of low diversion; the remainder of their time of little value; for it is a known fact, that a man who sticks to his loom regularly, will perform his work much better, and do more for it than one who idles away half his time.¹ A similar thought was in the heads of the members of the Select Committee on Handloom Weavers in 1834, when they put the question: 'Are you aware that the working part of the population will not labour nor produce more cloth than is necessary for them to do in order that they may live?'² *Men will make no effort to improve their standard of living unless a higher is set before them.* A significant instance is offered by Houldsworth³ of Glasgow in 1799. Some of the workers in the mills were Highlanders, whose diet consisted of herrings, oatmeal and potatoes. They worked extremely long hours, 6 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.; but their work was so slow and irregular that they could not earn more than 12 or 14 shillings a week. They were not moved from this listless indifference to their standard of comfort until the arrival of a group of English workers in the factory, who by their example altered their attitude.⁴

¹ *Six Months' Tour through the North of England* (1771), III, p. 192.

² *S.C. on Handloom Weavers*, P.P. 1834, x, p. 401.

³ *S.C. on Manufactures, Commerce, and Shipping*, P.P., 1833, QQ. 5282-89.

⁴ The attitude here described is far older than Capitalism or Communism. It

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Nor did this attitude change rapidly. Even after the organization of the workers, when the unions were beginning to feel their power, the same lack of desires beyond the subsistence level persisted. Take, for example, the evidence of E. Coulson, secretary of the Operative Bricklayers' Society before the Trade Union Commission of 1867.¹ The proper rate of wages, he said, was determined in each district by the men. 'They proceed upon the prices of food, house rent, and other things that are necessary for their subsistence . . . They appear to be contented with the wages which will pay for the cost of living and a little more.' With this may be coupled a vivid example from Germany of some thirty years later, when that country was hardly more than a generation from the classical domestic system. 'The proprietor of one of the largest and finest weaving sheds in Germany wished lately to persuade the best of his weavers to mind three instead of two looms, as formerly. But as this arrangement met with opposition from the workers, he sent for one of them to inquire into the causes of the opposition. On being made aware that the new arrangement meant an increased weekly wage, the weaver answered: He and his wife earned 28s. per week; he did not wish to

¹ *Trade Union Commission*, P.P. 1867, XXXII, QQ., 1426-30.

is to be found in every primarily agrarian society at the arrival of industrialism. The Russian factories of the mid-nineteenth century worked long hours and ran the machinery at a slower pace than in any other country. Similarly in India, Sir Thomas Brassey reported in 1871 (*Lectures on the Labour Question*, p. 12): 'It has been found that the greater increase of pay . . . neither increases the rapidity of execution, nor adds to the comfort of the labourer. The Hindoo workman knows no other wants than his daily portion of rice . . . The labourer, therefore, desists from work as soon as he has provided for his necessities of the day. Higher pay adds nothing to his comforts: it serves but to diminish his energy.'

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exert himself for more; more money meant only "a spree more".¹

It is this lack of desires beyond the 'cost of living and a little more' which accounts in some measure for the continuance of 'truck'. The wage-earner of the eighteenth century had always received part of his wages in kind. The custom persisted in many rural areas as the normal means of remuneration until late in the nineteenth century, for example, in northern Northumberland in 1867.² It is of course infinitely more convenient in countries as yet not penetrated by an adequate transport and distributive system. Nor was it confined to the working classes. As late as 1840, Reimer, the Berlin publisher, was paying his authors in fat geese, carrots, cloth, wool, salmon, wine, brandy, even with sweepstake tickets and trousers.³ The rebellion against truck might indeed never have come to a head, and to the Royal Commission of 1842, but for the greed and the chicanery of the small employers. Undoubtedly part of the difficulty of the change from a customary to an industrial civilization lies in the adjustment of money to equivalent goods, which offers advantages to the unscrupulous. But for the crookedness of the employers, it is possible that the truck system and the tommy-shop would have persisted until swept away in the wider distribution of wholesale-produced goods by the arrival of the railway. The worker

¹ G. VON SCHULTZE-GÄVERNITZ, *The Cotton Trade in England and on the Continent* (1893, trs. of 1895), p. 49 f.n.

² And in many other parts, cf. *Report of Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture of 1867*, *passim*.

³ E. KOHN-BRAMSTEDT, *Aristocracy and the Middle Classes of Germany* (1937), p. 227 f.n.

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who had few desires beyond his subsistence would have continued in contentment with payment in kind, had it not been for the gross cheating by which it was accompanied.

In examining the underlying motives which influenced the factory-workers to exert unremitting pressure over a long period for the ten hour day, it must be borne in mind that individual earnings were not identical with the whole income. The unit of income was not the individual but the family. The family income is a familiar conception out of the obscurity of the past up to our own day. In 1891, an observer in Lancashire speaks of cotton-weaving families earning £400 a year. We may be very sure that in the forties the custom had not lapsed. Thus in the normal circumstances of the forties, the whole family was at work; and its income would be the aggregate earnings of all its working members. Moreover, the family income is continuous. The children begin at a very early age, and continue working through their lives, reinforced, as they grow up, by their own children. The ageing workers drop out late, to be supported by their children and grandchildren. In any case, it may be taken that in the forties there were not many of these dependants. In the 1841 census, only 4.4 per cent of the population was over 65 (compared with 7.4 per cent in the 1931 census). The average life span of a working man was notoriously short, and it may be conjectured that the number of retired workers supported by their families was inconsiderable.

Further, in considering the motives behind the Ten

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Hours Movement, it is necessary not to think of the conditions existing at the time of the Act, but of those during the months when the final Bill was being drafted. The Bill which became the Act was first introduced into the House of Commons by Ashley in January 1846, which means that it was being drafted in 1845. Fielden's motion for the second reading in April was rejected. At this date, only the most prescient foresaw the slump which would come in the autumn, and make 1847 a year of high food prices and short time. In any case it was out of the question for the Short Time committees, even if they had so desired, to withdraw the Bill. Conditions were far worse when it was eventually passed in May 1847; but the subsequent recovery of trade justified the continuance of the campaign. At the time of the drafting of the Bill, however, conditions were good. Money piece-rates were high; trade was brisk; and the cost of living had been declining since 1840. Thus a family in full work was likely to be earning the amount required to provide its standard of needs in much less time than the 11½ hour day.

Moreover, the capacity of certain grades to produce was being raised by improvements in machinery. In cotton, 4-loom power-weaving was introduced in the forties.¹ Further, the machine had been speeded up. The average number of picks woven per minute in 1833 had been raised from 90 to 112; in 1850, the average had risen to 130. Leonard Horner, the factory inspector, in

¹ The first record of payment to a 4-loom weaver is 1839. The next is 1845, and continues. It is probable that it was being slowly tried out between the two dates. G. H. WOOD estimated that the *average* of looms per weaver had reached 2.2 by 1850 (*J.R.S.S.*, 1910, I, pp. 137-8).

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discussing wages in 1849, noted that since 1845 the number had increased from 142 to 148, an increase of one twenty-fourth in speed.¹ In the West Riding, the powerloom was making slow headway in locality by locality. In Leeds, it came early, for stuff about 1826, for cloth about 1832; but it did not reach Huddersfield before 1840, and in the 'heavy woollen district' of Batley and Dewsbury it was not introduced until as late as 1850. On the other hand, the self-acting mule was introduced into the woollen trade at Huddersfield about 1839.² All these, and other, improvements meant a higher earning capacity to the worker on piece-rates; and piece-workers represented some four-fifths of the total personnel of the textile factories.³

From these contributory causes the true reason for the factory-workers' support of the Ten Hours Bill may be gathered. But a short way removed from the old domestic worker, they rebelled against the discipline of the regularity imposed by the machine. They had, however, learned from the story of the Luddites, the impossibility of opposing it by insurrection and sabotage. So long as the machine was inefficient and costly they were driven to work long hours in order to win their subsistence. But the improvement in machinery made it

¹ *Factory Inspectors' Reps.*, P.P. 1850, XXIII, p. 184.

² 'Women's Work in Leeds', by CLARA E. COLLETT; *E.J.*, 1 (1891), p. 460; and 'Wages in the Worsted and Woollen Manufactures in the West Riding', by A. L. BOWLEY, *J.R.S.S.*, 1902, p. 102 *et seq.*

³ In 1910, piece-workers formed 65.7 per cent of the cotton operatives. But a large proportion of the balance on time-rates were employed by the piece-workers; thus, for all practical purposes, they became piece-workers themselves (see *J.R.S.S.* 1910, 1, p. 614) and no doubt the same applied to the mill-hands of the forties.

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possible for them to earn more in a shorter time. Their needs were limited, and their supernumerary desires cheaply and easily satisfied. Able to purchase their necessities by the additional earnings of their women and children, the male adult workers naturally preferred leisure to money. Whereas in the first years of the movement, they had wanted to remove the women and children in order to disperse a reserve of adult male labour which depressed rates, so, as the machine improved and rates rose in the early forties, they began to look to leisure for its own sake. The children had been the 'public and parliamentary' grounds in the early phase of the movement: in the second, their place as a 'cause' was taken by the women and young persons. In 1835, women over 13 formed over 48 per cent of the personnel of the cotton factories (in 1850, 55.6 per cent); if their hours of labour were reduced and limited, it was inevitable that the factories could not work outside those hours, and the adult males could also go 'laiking'. There was some chance of escaping the tyranny of the machine, and of recovering something of the old, happy-go-lucky, gossiping life of the pre-power age.

Nor were they disappointed with the results of the Act of 1847. It became law in bad times, with cuts in wage rates and short time in operation. In the first years, there were some who were inclined to regret the limitation of the day, and claimed to be worse off.¹ But as the clouds of the crisis were swept away, the benefits became clearer. For one thing the shorter hours made workers

¹ *Factory Inspectors' Reps.*, P.P. 1849, xxii, Nos. 176, 178, 223, 231.

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less tired, and the fact that their earnings depended on their diligence, drove them to closer application. Even as early as 1849, owners of cotton mills were reporting to the factory inspectors that they were paying out more money for less time, that the men were working harder, and could not be induced to work beyond the legal hours. The men had accepted the 10 per cent reduction on the whole cheerfully; with ten hours instead of twelve, said one, a man could do with one less meal a day and so save money. In 1849, it is true that average earnings were about 10 per cent smaller; but they were working 58 instead of 69 hours: the loss, estimates G. H. Wood,¹ was 'not equal, even to the 10 per cent reduction of piece rates, let alone the 16 per cent reduction in hours'. By 1850, the workers' earnings were level with 1845, and they had gained nine hours a week. In other parts of the country the benefits were perhaps not so obvious. The Scots, that 'refractory, scrupulous and positive people', bemoaned the loss of money rather than welcomed the gain in time. But in the West Riding woollen industry, there appears, save for the period of short time, to have been little loss. Wages rose between 1839 and 1849, and again from 1849 to 1859, while hours decreased from 69 to 60. This was in Huddersfield. In Leeds, women power-loom weavers were earning the same in 1849 as they had in 1835, with a lower cost of living; by 1857, they had gained another 33 per cent.²

An impressive fact emerges. Between 1831 and 1845,

¹ 'Factory Legislation, considered with reference to the Wages, etc.', by G. H. Wood in *J.R.S.S.*, 1902, p. 295.

² Wood, loc. cit., p. 296.

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the factory workers shifted their interest from that of wider employment to that of leisure. How is this to be explained except on the grounds that they were earning their subsistence and that they were satisfied with that? It may be objected that the level of wages was still extremely low, with maximum earnings rarely higher than 12s. 6d. a week and with the majority considerably lower. If, however, the fall in the cost of living, owing to both increased efficiency and the policy of lower tariffs, which began in the forties, together with the family wage, is taken into consideration, it must be agreed that the standard of living was higher in the forties than in the thirties. The fact that the Short Time committees were able to carry through a Bill which, by cutting short the working day, deprived workers of their opportunity to earn, is otherwise inexplicable. Clearly the workers did not demand a higher standard of life. The lack of enthusiasm for possible increased earnings argues that the factory workers, as a whole, were still in that comparatively primitive state, when their ambitions looked to securing 'the cost of living and a little more'. The new intensification of labour allowed them to reach their level in shorter time, while at the same time by the fatigue it imposed on them, caused them to prefer leisure to goods. The crucial point is the standard of living desired. Until a higher standard is offered and demonstrated, few men will look for it or aspire to it. There is in custom a *vis inertiae* which confounds the concepts of the economists.¹

¹ A personal anecdote may illuminate this point further. In 1937, I was having a drink in a small inn in the West Country. The potboy was exchanging jokes with my neighbour at the bar, a little man in a worn brown suit, with

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The Ten Hours Acts and its associated acts applied solely to the textile factories. The allied textile industries were gradually brought under regulation between 1845 and 1861. But beyond and outside these, there was a huge welter of industries which appear completely unaffected by the Ten Hours Movement and what it stood for. This may be explained by the fact that none of these industries was yet far enough developed to be able to make that rapid advance which the textile industries, especially cotton, made after 1830. In cotton, until the seventies, commerce increased at a pace faster than production; hence there was always a demand for labour, which in turn, since labour could not stand the pace and was also able to exact a higher reward, led to increased mechanization; the 6-loom weaver appears first in 1882. But the less developed industries of the forties were still in the comparatively primitive stage, that is, they worked long hours but in a more leisurely way. Some workshops were still little more than a rendezvous for piece-workers of the older system. At Baillie Todd's tobacco works at Paisley, in 1842, the hands were piece-workers who made their own hours; and there was no work after 2 p.m. on Saturdays.¹ At Cochran & Grieve's tobacco factory in

¹ *Children's Employment Commission*, P.P. 1843, xv, p. 151.

'poacher' written all over him. 'No,' he replied in answer to some broad jest, 'I don't want a wife. All she's going to do is to come down here, and run up a long line of gin-and-its.' With his thumb he sketched on the air a long line. 'No, I'll stick to the little bitch. She don't care if there's money in the house or not.' He lifted the terrier on to the bar, and after we had admired her points, he told us that on his last visit to the neighbouring town, the manager of the big cinema ('Carlton, it was called, C-A-R-L-T-O-N - did you ever hear that name before?') had offered him £10 to give a ten-minute turn with his terrier and his ferrets. 'But I wasn't going to do it. *What's the use of ten pounds to me?*' There, I said to myself, that's old England, that was.

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Glasgow there was likewise a Saturday half-holiday.¹ At Henderson's pipe factory in North Shields, the shop was open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.;² the workers came when they liked and left when they wanted to; and the shop was empty by 7 p.m. In the pinworks at Warrington, the Saturday half-holiday began at 4 p.m.³ In a carpet factory in Glasgow, the drawboy weavers knocked off at 2 p.m. or 4 p.m. on Saturday.⁴ A very great number of industries were entirely unorganized; there was a considerable amount of piece-work; hours were long, but labour was not as intense as in the factories because as yet there was no mechanization. Hence the struggles of the workers in these technically undeveloped industries are for wages rather than for hours. The strike in the West Yorkshire coalfield of 1858 was to prevent the owners reducing hours, and thus reducing earnings.⁵ Questions concerning hours arose rather out of overtime than over the length of the day, although occasional complaints were made of the latter.

It was not until the late fifties that the workers generally began systematically to agitate for shorter hours. If we look at the main strikes of this decade, it will be found that the greater number by far are for advances in wages or against reduction, on the question of overtime, or over apprentices being employed as journeymen at lower rates. It was not until each industry arrived at the

¹ *Children's Employment Commission*, P.P. 1843, xv, p. 150.

² *ibid.*, p. 301.

³ *ibid.*, p. 313.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵ *Rep. of the Committee on Trade Societies, etc.*; Natn. Assn. for the Promotion of the Social Sciences, 1860, p. 11 *et seq.*

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appropriate level of wages that it began to agitate over the question of hours.

Yet through the fifties and the early sixties hours were sporadically being reduced owing to the action of unions, and the question of leisure was becoming more important in men's lives. In 1853, the Glasgow masons struck for a reduction of hours from 60 to 57 and a wage advance from $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. an hour (i.e. from 23s. to 26s. a week). The masters offered 24s. for a 60-hour week; but the men held out and secured a 57-hour week at 5d., or 25s.¹ By the sixties, the question of hours had become of serious importance. Before the Commission on Trade Unions in 1867, Allan, the secretary of the A.S.E., said, apropos of claims for reduced hours: 'We have had several instances in which the workmen have voluntarily offered to forfeit the differences by the reducing of wages.'² Harnott, secretary of the Friendly Society of Operative Stonemasons, described a strike in Newcastle of February of that year. The men applied for a reduction from $55\frac{1}{2}$ to $50\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week at the same rate of pay, 4s. 6d. a day, or 27s. a week. The masters offered 5s. a day, 30s. a week, if they would keep to the old hours. At a meeting of 422 men, 401 voted for the nine hour day, and only 21 for the 30s. a week. 'The result was received by loud and prolonged cheering.'³ It will be noted that none of these trades can be described as mechanized; thus the question of the intensity of labour does not yet arise. On the other hand, they were not demanding increased

¹ *Rep. of the Committee on Trade Societies, etc.*; Natn. Assn. for the Promotion of the Social Sciences, 1860, p. 285.

² *T.U. Comm.*, 1867, Q. 886.

³ *ibid.*, QQ. 406-84.

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wages, and in certain cases were even prepared to forgo a proportion of their earnings in order to secure a modicum of leisure. They would not have made the offer if their wages had not been sufficiently high for them to be able to live at the level to which they believed themselves entitled and to which they were accustomed.

If, then, this analysis of the movement for shorter hours is valid, it would appear that the first step towards improvement of welfare is not in the direction of goods, food, or clothing, but towards leisure; and that until men are seduced by various events or methods towards higher consumption, they will remain at their earlier level, until at least their desire for rest has been secured.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPLOITATION OF LEISURE

THE Ten Hours Act, with its amendments of 1850 and 1853, marks a clearly-defined watershed in the social history of England. In the first place, it recognized that the days of the old desultory industry had passed. In the transitional period, hours of labour had been long, but the work had been leisurely and unconcentrated, conforming to the natural rhythms of the body, and production had been slow. The new industry required a higher output in a shorter time, a concentration and regularity of effort. To borrow a phrase newly minted for an old-established phenomenon, Stakhanovism had appeared.

In the second place, the Act marks the first serious advance towards amenity of life. If only designed for certain workers in certain special industries, it drew attention to the fact of leisure as a desirable thing in itself. Historians of working-class history have unconsciously given the impression that none but the manual workers were the victims of long hours. In reality, early Victorian England had never considered leisure except as something which went by the name of idleness. The middle-classes had worked and continued to work as if there was little outside their business to interest them. They still conformed to the ethic of Askesis through

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work, set on high by Puritan forebears. Parallel with a new intensity of industry, there had appeared a new intensity of commerce. Until 1854, Lloyds was open on Saturday afternoons.¹ For at least two more decades the Stock Exchange was dealing until three o'clock on Saturdays; and in the year of his death, 1865, Palmerston was testily remonstrating with Gladstone for his refusal, on account of the expense, to allow Civil Service clerks the half-holiday.² The establishment of *la semaine anglaise* was a long time coming. Very slowly the organized workers in union after union secured to themselves the stoppage of work on this day, first at 2 p.m., later at 1.30, later still at 12.30; the last concession in order that they might go to football matches. Gradually the last children under 10 were redeemed from labour — only a short time before 1870. The increase of factories brought about the elimination of many of the innumerable small workshops, where they had been employed, and the concentration of the workers under fewer roofs. Thus they were more easily inspected, and the factories more easily controlled. By this means industry after industry became ripe for government interference. But the unorganized industries and trades had to wait. Even in 1886, shop assistants were working 84 or 85 hours a week, at least 25 per cent longer hours than factory hands.³ Thus it is impossible to point to a date and say: 'Here, for the common man, leisure is decreed as part of his normal deserts.' One

¹ C. WRIGHT and C. E. FAYLE, *A Hist. of Lloyds* (1928), pp. 355-6.

² P. GUEDALLA, *Gladstone and Palmerston* (1928), p. 342.

³ Evidence of Principal Inspectors of Factories before *S.C. on Shop Hours Regulation Bill*, P.P. 1886, XII.

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thing, however, is clear: while in the fifties, leisure is only beginning to be a problem, *by the end of the sixties, amusement for leisure has become an undertaking worthy of commercial exploitation.*

The shorter working week had left a vacuum to be filled by recreation. But in the fifties what recreation was there for the townsman? During the time when industry had still been rural handicraft, recreation had been based on rural life. Apart from poaching, and poaching strictly defined appears to have been more prevalent in the south,¹ most of the rough sports of the country had been followed by all classes. Many of them were cruel or brutal to twentieth-century sensibilities, cock-fighting, badger-baiting, dog-fighting, and even fights between man and dog;² but these were no less the amusements of the country gentlemen, who were often as rude as their tenants and labourers. Cricket appears to have been fairly common, in the south, in Coventry, in Bradford.³ In the north, whippet-racing, coursing, fishing and bowling — 'often pursued on public roads to the great danger and annoyance of travellers' — appear to have been favoured. 'A fight, a betting match, a dog-race, varied by an occasional race-meeting,' were given

¹ This is probably due to the proximity of London, where there was a ready market for game. It is possible that game preservation only extended to the north comparatively late.

² These last were still common in the Midlands in the seventies (*Private information*).

³ *S.C. on Commons' Inclosure*, P.P. 1844, v; and *S.C. on the Health of Towns*, 1840, QQ. 1237-41 and 1634-55.

⁴ *S.C. on Children's Employment (Mines)* P.P. 1842, xvi, p. 673. I take it that the usual game was played with iron balls and resembled the popular game in France of to-day. The more scientific game requiring a green appears to have had some vogue in the seventies and eighties, judging from the number of clubs which were registered as limited liability companies in these decades.

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as the colliers' pleasures to the Social Science Association in 1860.¹ Coventry in 1840 played football, quoits, bandy, and bowls, while Bradford, in addition to cricket, enjoyed spell and nur.² Even hunting was not unknown. The hatters of Denton, a village near Ashton-under-Lyne, had kept a pack of hounds and hunted three days a week; each house kennelled a hound, and on a note of the horn in the morning, the hounds darted from the houses and gathered at the grocer's to be fed. It was known as 'The Oatmeal Pack'.

Few of these pleasures were available to the townsman. Open spaces, even if they existed — there were none in Manchester or Macclesfield — were always being threatened by enclosure.³ Moreover, the circumstances of the growth of the towns furnish in part an explanation. Unlike French civilization, which is stamped with the impress of ancient Rome, that of England had no urban tradition. The great majority of English towns and cities were overgrown villages into which were imported the manners and habits of the village. Few English towns were consciously planned, and as a result the rural community swelled until it absorbed other villages, spreading its houses on either side of what had been cart-tracks and footpaths. It was the village mentality coupled with the rapid rise of population which created the sanitary crimes — pigs were kept in Lambeth in 1840 — and the lack of decency characteristic of the English town of the early nineteenth century. No wonder that

¹ *Rep., etc., on Trade Societies*, 1860, p. 23.

² *S.C. on Health of Towns*, Q. 1635.

³ *S.C. on Health of Towns*, QQ. 1241, 1628.

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when they woke to the fact, the English thought that 'soap was civilization'.

For these reasons, the townsman was still three parts a countryman, and could not adjust himself to the constricted life of the mean streets. For his feelings, read the melancholy evidence of Edwin Rose, a millwright of Manchester in 1833, who had once enjoyed the felicities of continental towns. 'Here', he said, 'a man can do nothing but go to the public house on a Sunday, and he goes with the intention of getting drunk as it were: and sitting and drinking glass after glass: there [in France and Switzerland, where he had worked] people go to dances and different games . . . and having different recreations at the places where they go, can cheerfully enjoy themselves drinking but little. But here a man can do nothing at a public house if he goes there but drink, and he can go nowhere else on Sunday.'¹ There were no games played in Manchester — 'except when a number of the more disorderly steal off to the borders of Cheshire or Yorkshire . . . to have a "mill" as they call it'.² 'Have they anywhere to walk?' asked a member of the commission. 'No', was the answer, 'only the dusty roads.' Although the racket court is mentioned in *The Pickwick Papers* as part of the equipment of the Fleet Prison, and although Hazlitt in his *Table Talk* wrote a threnody for Cavanagh the fives-player, so little is known of the early history of these games that it must be believed they had little popular support. In London in 1840 there were two

¹ *First Rep. of the Factories Inquiry Commission*, 1833, D. I, p. 122.

² *S.C. on Health of Towns*, QQ. 1315, 1324.

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swimming-baths; but none in the provinces.¹ There was a certain amount of rowing still done by the inhabitants of the one-time villages on Thames-side, such as Lambeth. But that was being slowly made less easy by the river-traffic. The old village dances, although being slowly deformed, were still danced in the streets. The Assistant Commissioners for the Handloom Weavers report in 1840² that the Londoner indulged in bulldog fights, though these appear to have died out in the next ten years, pigeon-fancying and pedestrian matches. 'Men will take their singing birds to the public house about 10 or 11 on Sunday mornings, to sing them against each other.' Gambling was scarcely known. The Commissioner of City Police stated there was a little in coffee shops 'amongst low persons for small objects. It is very much on the Sunday morning when Jews meet, and they gamble for cups of coffee and articles of exchange, such things as they deal in . . . As to gambling houses in the larger sense of the term, I know of none, except', he significantly adds, 'the Stock Exchange may be so considered'.³

¹ But the owner of those in Westminster was mortified to find that 'instead of being used as matters of health, they have been merely used as matters of pleasure.' *S.C. on the Health of Towns*, 1840, Q. 3079.

² P.P. 1840, xxiii, p. 246.

³ *S.C. on Gaming*, P.P. 1844, vi, QQ. 771, 772, 751. Betting appears to have been entirely a vice of the wealthy and their parasites. The lessee of Hampton Court and Epsom race courses stated that although 15-20,000 attended the Derby, they did not gamble (QQ. 1362-65). It must be admitted that the evidence of Barnard, the witness in question, is all through pretty fishy. But the Druid (Henry Hall Dixon) gives a charming picture of the countryman at the races in *Silk and Scarlet* (1859): 'A labourer in a smock . . . with his wife, his six olive branches, and, of course, the family umbrella, on the sunny slope of Goodwood Hill.' The Duke of Richmond admitted the local labourers to the races free.

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For spectacles in London, apart from the two opera houses and Astley's circus, there appear to have been less than ten theatres in 1855; but, no doubt, to these must be added the penny gaffs, of which little information is available. Some of the difficulties were due to the legal requirements. The Lord Chamberlain's licence was required not only for the play but for the theatre as well. Thus arose the music-hall, which, for the benefit of the poorer classes, evaded the regulations. Its embryo may be seen in the three entertainment halls of Manchester of the early fifties. The Casino, the Victoria Saloon and the Polytechnic were half beer-house (they could not sell spirits), half dancing and music saloon. The patrons paid twopence to go in and could take their entrance money out in refreshments. No dialogues were permitted, since this would bring the proprietor within the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain. The performances consisted of 'singing in character, dancing of various kinds, clog and grotesque dancing, juggling and tumbling by performers specially engaged'. It was reckoned that about 15,000 a week attended the shows in Manchester, including numbers of children. The Watch Committee sent up a specially qualified witness to persuade the Commission on Public Houses to recommend the control of these establishments. But the Commission were unsympathetic. They elicited the fact that the monthly sales at one saloon were 1500 gallons of ginger beer, 180 of ale and porter, and 160 of coffee; and that there was no drunkenness, and further, that this form of entertainment was 'almost the sole public

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amusement of the artizans and working mill-hands'.¹

The evidence before both this Commission and that of the following year, 1854, coloured as it is by the temperaments and interests of the witnesses, leaves no doubt as to the squalor of town life, the revolt of the poorer classes against a society which offered them nothing but church or chapel on Sundays, and throws light on their efforts to find alternatives to the gin-shop and the public house. As a general picture, the evidence leaves an impression that there were few places except the drinking shops for the Londoner or the inhabitant of other big commercial centres to go. True, certain towns, particularly in Lancashire and the West Riding, during the forties and fifties bought land for the purpose of providing parks and recreation grounds (although there were no playgrounds for children in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bolton or Hull in 1840), while public libraries even were opened in half a dozen Lancashire towns before 1854. In Bolton, the public library opened on Sunday. Round London there were certain open spaces, Hampton Court, Richmond, whither, Sir Joseph Paxton said, numbers went in vans. There was Greenford Green, where flat-bottomed barges took people up and down the canal at 6d. a head. There were oases such as Pamphilon's coffee-shop in Sherrard Street, where you could get a cup of good coffee, a loaf and butter for 3½d., and a plate of meat ('I could not ask for better, nor could I have it cooked better in my own house', said the witness, a House of Commons messenger) for the same sum, where

¹ *S.C. on Public Houses, etc.*, P.P. 1852-53, xxxvii, QQ. 3818 *et seq.*

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all the leading periodicals from the *Quarterly* down to the penny publications, and French, German and Italian newspapers, together with a library, were supplied. Pamphilon spent £400 a year on books and newspapers. In a few coffee-houses there were bagatelle boards, and draughts, backgammon and chess were allowed. But such places were rare. The general feeling among the poorer townsmen was that there was nothing to do and nowhere to go, except to the public-house with beer at 3½d. a pint. 'Sunday is our great difficulty,' said one man. 'We cannot get over Sunday.' Even in the country there was the same feeling. A Lancashire magistrate reported that the farmers and labourers in his district said they had no means of amusement and no means of society save in the drink shops.¹

Sports and amusements are part of the normal culture of a population. In the eighteenth century, movement had been so small that the culture of a locality was not distorted by newcomers. The immigrant was absorbed by the locality, and adopted the culture of his new home. In the nineteenth century, the growth of the town was so rapid that the newcomers overwhelmed the native population. The neighbouring parishes to London were absorbed by immigrants.* Previous colonists of England

¹ *S.C. on Public Houses*, etc., 1854, Evidence of Balfour, Paxton, Neilson.

² <i>Populations:</i>	1801	1851
Kensington	10,437	90,358
Fulham	10,028	29,646
Chelsea	11,604	56,538
Hampstead	4,343	11,986
Mile End	9,848	56,602
Poplar	8,278	47,162
Camberwell	7,059	54,667

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had arrived in a homogeneous body, bringing with them the culture of their country of origin, and imposing it upon the natives. But the nineteenth-century newcomers gathered from many localities, and thus had no similar culture to impose. All they did was to stifle what was there by weight of numbers. That there was a local culture in London and its satellite parishes is witnessed by survivals of speech, manner, dress and habit which have not disappeared. But the localities were as a whole too small to stand up to the invaders, and could neither absorb them nor inoculate them with their own tradition.

Yet at the same time rational amusement was opposed by the organized religious and temperance bodies,¹ which held that the Lord's day should be spent in service and meditation, and also by 'The Trade' who saw in a further closing of the public-houses a decline in their profits. But try as they might, neither liquor nor religion could prevent the satisfaction of an economic demand. The demand was there; and during the last forty years of the century the vacuum was filled by capitalists alive to popular desires. The rise of racing and football from customary amusements to public rackets offers excellent examples of the change.

Horse-running is, of course, one of the oldest of customary amusements in all countries. Even in England, racing of this nature has not quite died out, as is witnessed by the annual race near Malton in the North

¹ Sir John Walmesley's motion in the Commons of Feb. 1856, to open the British Museum and the National Gallery 'after morning service on Sunday' was rejected by 376 votes to 48. In April, the Commissioner of Woods and Forests started band-concerts in the London parks on Sunday. The Archbishop of Canterbury remonstrated, and the concerts were suppressed.

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Riding. In England, racing was, in its earliest form, a semi-public amusement provided for their own pleasure by princes, peers and gentlemen, but attracting large numbers of the local commons. In 1654, Major-General Whalley had tried to stop Lord Exeter and others from racing at Lincoln, on the ground that the crowd might be composed of 'irreconcilable enemies' and brawling follow. The rich found the horses, riders and prizes; and the poor enjoyed the fun. To the latter it was a spectacle; they did not bet, probably because they had no money to risk. Horse-racing rose out of matches between owners. No doubt there was betting; but it was not a commercial occupation. In the mid-eighteenth century, all the great races were long-distance, four, six, or even eight miles; and the jockeys were heavyweights. Horses were rarely put into training before three years old; some never appeared till five. Gradually the prizes rose in value; the increased expenses of training led owners to enter their horses at two or three. In 1762, 261 races were ridden; in 1843, 1218. At the first date, the stakes amounted to £61,440; at the second, to nearly £200,000. In 1807, 691 horses were started; in 1843, 1289.¹ With these increases, a new type of quasi-professional began to enter the game, the dubious, under-bred, half-pay captains to be found in the pages of Lever, Surtees and Thackeray, and the buckeens of the boxing rings. Moreover, the amusement had been found to be an opening for enterprise in the hiring and management of courses, the charging of rental

¹ See preface to *On the Laws and Practice of Horse Racing*, by the Hon. Capt. Rous, R.N. (1850).

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for gaming booths and refreshment tents.¹ Prize money and purses rose in value; the popularity of the Grand Liverpool Steeplechase (later the Grand National) was solely due to its heavy purse, £1200. At the same time, costs were rising. The sprawling towns wiped out many small local courses; Ealing, the Bayswater Hippodrome at Notting Hill, the Dove House at Pinner, all disappeared.

Racing in the early nineteenth century had become a thoroughly dirty business. Owners, jockeys and trainers were wholly unscrupulous; racecourse committees were in the game. 'No trick', says Sylvanus, 'was too dirty from poison to running a mastiff at the favourite in full stretch.'² The racing gentlemen of the day appear for the most part to have lacked even a rudimentary sense of honour. To borrow Stein's description of the Prussian Junkers, they were 'a mass of half-educated and insolent persons which rides roughshod over the sensibilities of fellow-citizens in the exercise of their twofold function of noblemen and officials'. The famous 'Squire' Osbaldeston reveals himself as a ruthless winner at almost any price. Of Lord William Bentinck, who held himself out as the champion of principle in turf transactions, Charles Greville, his racing partner, wrote: 'About bets against horses, nobody has ever been more unscrupulous than he . . . while he is thundering against poor low-lived rogues for the villainies they have committed, he has himself been doing things which high-minded men (like his

¹ See Evidence in *S.C. on Gaming*, 1844.

² *Bye-lanes and Downs of England* (1850), p 15.

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Father for instance) . . . would think nearly if not quite as discreditable and reprehensible.¹ Lord Derby is reprobated by the same diarist in even stronger terms, and is typical of an age in which the Rev. Lord Frederick Beauclerk could boast of making £600 a year out of his skilful chicanery on the cricket-field. With men of this stamp as the leaders in the sport, it is not to be wondered that the Jockey Club's control of this bunch of buckeens and their parasites was feeble.

Flat racing, with a weak Jockey Club, was bad. Steeplechasing was far worse. There was no governing body and no rules. Suspension for malpractices meant no more than suspension from the particular course. The suspended member could race elsewhere, and his suspension did not cover flat-racing. In the period 1855-1862, steeplechasing reached such a depth of infamy that on the foundation of the National Hunt Committee, the racing correspondent of the redoubtable *Baily's* wrote unrebuked: 'Steeplechasing, in simple language, had arrived at such a deplorable pitch of inutility and fraud in the year 1862 that it must have been bodily handed over to the spoiler to do what he liked with, or be subjected to the practical pruning knife of honesty and discretion which is about to be applied to it . . . From beginning to end the whole state was rotten. There were no rules, no means of preventing fraud, no adjustments of weights, excepting the private interests of the Clerks of the Course and their friends, no absolute certainty of receiving the stakes, and an absolute certainty of not

¹ *The Greville Diaries* (ed. of 1938), v, p. 185.

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getting the forfeits.'¹ Within the next twenty years all this would be changed.

The amendment is due to much the same influences that affected industry. Just as a new class of capitalist had promoted the railway, a new class of capitalist saw profitable speculation in horse-racing. The new demand for public amusement in the late fifties and early sixties offered them their opportunity. But to attract the new public, racing had to be cleaned up, and courses controlled. This new control was unwittingly facilitated by the railways. Since by its rigidity the railway could only carry race-goers to courses where there was a station, only such courses prospered. Racecourses so situated that they could not attract the big public soon found themselves unable even to attract owners and their horses. At the same time, the more fortunately situated courses had instituted gate-money, which not only made it easier to keep out what to-day would be called race-gangs, but also permitted them to offer higher prizes. Thus the old-fashioned, happy-go-lucky race-meeting began to disappear. By 1884, the number of courses under Jockey Club rules had sunk from the 130 of 1874 to 65, and meetings from 185 to 136, races from 1873 to 1615.² In Kent, only one course survived in place of eight. 'Owners of horses', says Lord Cadogan, 'are no longer satisfied with the prizes offered for competition at

¹ 'Market Harborough and Steeple-Chasing Reform', by 'The Gentleman in Black'; *Baily's Magazine*, Feb. 1863, pp. 5-6. 'I omit', he adds, 'all the little incidents of pulling, jostling, roping and other unfair practices, from a delicacy I feel, lest I should hurt the feelings of too many people at once.'

² 'The State of the Turf', by LORD CADOGAN, in the *Fortnightly Review*, 1885, 1, p. 107 *et seq.* This may be partly due to the limiting of the flat-racing season.

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the old-fashioned meetings, and the stakes must be increased to thousands where hundreds used to attract large fields of horses. The demand cannot be met by the managers of some old-fashioned meetings which have no entrance money to apply to the increased 'added money' required, and thus it comes to pass that open meetings are becoming more and more difficult to manage, and consequently less worthy of support and encouragement.¹ The Jockey Club at last seriously assumed its responsibilities; it organized and licensed all the officials of courses and made impossible the grotesque conditions of the earlier period.

The purging no doubt did something for what is so delightfully designated 'the purity of the Turf'; but neither the beneficiaries nor the critics of the earlier regime perceived that by the process of organization the sport had ceased to be a pleasant customary amusement, and was ripe for financial exploitation in a serious way. It is obviously impossible to discover the total amount of money invested in racing during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. An examination of the annual return of the Registrar of Companies does, however, reveal that the private speculative manager of the forties had promoted himself to the title of director, that some courses were setting up as limited liability companies, that existing ones were converting themselves to the brotherhood, and that the sport was now being operated on a thoroughly business-like footing. The amounts of capital are, by modern standards, modest: but they

¹ CADOGAN, loc. cit.

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increased with the progress of time. In 1874, Barrow Racecourse registered itself for a niggling £2000, and in the same year Ripon Grand Stand Co. for £2500. By 1896, Epsom Racing Stables and Folkestone Race Course were registering at £50,000 apiece. In twenty years, somewhere about a million and a half of capital went into courses and grandstands, a small amount in the aggregate, but significant of a great deal higher expenditure by private persons outside. For, out of the new organization, grew a new virus, the betting public, with its attendant industry. It is not a freak of language that the words 'bookmaker' and 'welsher' creep into popular speech in the early sixties. The old punting had been done inside the trade. Gully, prize-fighter, punter, race-horse owner and Member of Parliament, and his like, had betted with their fellows. But now a public with leisure to enjoy, desired to come in. 'The practice of betting . . . has spread to and infected all classes of the community.'¹ To assist it, a whole range of new publications came into existence. In 1859, *Sporting Life* appeared as a weekly; in 1881, it increased to four days a week; in 1883 it became a daily. The *Sportsman*, born in 1865, gained its popularity by reporting training; in 1876, it became a daily. The *Sporting Clipper* of 1872 started the long line of Templeman, Ajax, and other tipsters. 'It is a more curious than agreeable fact, that besides receiving more or less attention from nearly every general newspaper, "sport" should have so many prosperous journals exclusively devoted to it.'² Had this moralist of the

¹ CADOGAN, loc. cit. ² H. R. FOX BOURNE, *English Newspapers* (1887), II, p. 322.

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eighties been also an observer, he would have perceived that the growth of these new services to an uneducated society was inevitable. It was entirely consonant with the dicta of the *laissez-faire* economists that only through freedom of choice, freely exercised by the consumer and registered by the price system, could efficiency be obtained.

Leaving the racing racket to grow into a formidable interest, from interfering with which even Cabinets shrink,¹ let us turn to football as an attracter of consumers' money. In its first semi-organized form, football appears as a purely amateur game, the amusement of the former pupils of the public schools, an anarchic affair in which each side played according to its own parochial rules. Eventually the adherents of the 'dribbling' school split off from the enthusiasts of 'running with the ball and tackling', and in 1863, formed the Football Association. By the end of the decade, rules had been drawn up, and in 1871 the Football Association Challenge Cup was offered for competition. The first ties were played in the following year. Only four localities sent teams, London, Oxford, Cambridge, and Sheffield. The game, however, quickly rose to popularity. Birmingham, for example, possessed only one club in 1874; by 1876, it had twenty. The game spread to the masses, and from this innocent competition, professional football was born. Teams from the Midlands and the north began to enter, composed wholly of members of the lower income groups.

¹ One recalls on the one side the outcry raised by owners and trainers, and on the other the grouching of the troops, at governmental interference with racing during the War of 1914-18.

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Since the members were poor, their travelling expenses were paid by the clubs. Within a few years, the new teams began to dominate the old-boy clubs, and a stiff tonic was administered when Blackburn Rovers became one of the finalists in 1881, and in the following year Blackburn Olympic, amid much foul play, beat the Old Etonians 2—1 in the final. The victory kindled enthusiasm and a keen rivalry sprang up between the clubs. Since the game had been put on its legs by the public schools, which have no territorial *raison d'être*, the question of local qualification could not be put; and the seduction of good players from one club by another followed as a matter of course. Thus the way to professionalism was opened. 'Footballers', complained the *Field* in 1883,¹ 'not only find that the game can be made self-supporting, but that when managed on a business-like basis of hiring convenient grounds, advertising freely, and charging admission money to the spectators, it can be turned into a paying speculation,' while a correspondent of the same paper showed that good footballers were being set up as managers of public houses by their clubs, receiving £2 a week against the normal 15s. to 18s. paid to the non-footballer. 'It is no secret', he adds, 'that the men are fed on eggs and oysters, beefsteaks, etc., and that presents of legs of mutton and groceries are made *ad lib.*'² The Association tried to stamp out these practices. Resolutions were passed deprecating the payment of players. On complaint by an injured member, an offending club was occasionally suspended for a short

¹ *Field*, Dec. 1st, 1883.

² *ibid.*, Dec. 8th, 1883.

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time. But it was all in vain. By 1888, the northern clubs, composed chiefly of workers, who played and trained hard, but had little leisure, were wholly crypto-professional. 'It is nothing', wrote a disgusted observer in 1894,¹ 'but the shoddiest of money-making concerns . . . It was an ill day for the game when the northern labourer diverted his attention from quoits and rabbit-coursing and pigeon-flying, and turned to football.' The plague had by this date spread even to the south, although the clubs did not yet show the reckless disposition to buy players that northern clubs displayed. Professionals were now receiving £3 a week in winter and £2 in summer. In 1890, one club paid £75 in summer retaining fees; in 1893, the same club paid £550. By this time, the Association was completely in the hands of the professional clubs. Three-quarters of the 48 members of the council of the Association were the paid officials of these clubs, and were dead against any return to the Arcadian days of amateurism. Of the 32 teams playing in the Football Association Cup ties on January 27th, 1894, 30 were professional. On this date, 140,000 spectators paid entrance money at 16 matches. In the same year, Mr. Justice Day in the course of summing up a libel action brought against a newspaper by the Newton Heath F.A. (damages, one farthing and no costs) remarked: 'He was afraid he had not quite kept up to the advance of civilization. He had not been aware that football was no longer a game in which people engaged for the sake of pleasure and exercise . . . it was played now by joint-

¹ 'Football', by 'Creston', in the *Fortnightly Review*, 1894, 1, p. 30.

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stock companies, limited, who could not play themselves, but could play by their servants.'

The learned judge was certainly behind the times. The first limited company, whose articles of association proclaimed it as formed for the sole object of playing football, had registered in 1888, the Small Heath Football Club, with a nominal capital of £500, of which £83 was paid up. In the next few years, Hyde, Aston Villa, Newcastle, Sunderland, Nottingham, West Bromwich Albion, Wolverhampton, Grimsby, Everton and Manchester City all registered. Their ideas of capital were rising. In 1896, Aston Villa reconstructed on a basis of £10,000; in 1898, Tottenham Hotspur and Portsmouth both appear on the register with capitals of £8000 each, and other clubs registered at similar sums. Already there were unsavory scandals, of such a character that even the *Evening News*, which championed professionalism against the amateur, rebuked the competitive extravagance in the purchase of players, which had brought some of the northern clubs into difficulties, and spoke severely of the 'sales of players which had disgraced the present season'.¹ By the mid-nineties, Association football had assumed the colours of capitalist enterprise. No longer a game played for the amusement of the participants, it had bred the usual satellite and parasitic industries; the tipster and the sporting journalist would soon be joined by the pool-company, ready to take the utmost advantage of a fully-roused cupidity. The gate-money taken at football matches at the present day is estimated at one and a half

¹ *Evening News*, Football Supplement, March 10th, 1894.

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million pounds¹ per annum; the turnover of pools has been put as high as forty million pounds.²

It would be superfluous in these pages to pursue the examination of the acquisitive motive at work in the organization of leisure, to watch the parallel debauchery of northern Rugby, to follow the importation of the game of golf, free, common and traditional in Scotland, and its adaptation to good business by the promoters of proprietary clubs, to observe the rescue of fishing from a popular sport to the reservations of the very wealthy,³ or to follow the history of fox-hunting from the days when foxes were so scarce that they had to be imported from France, Corsica, and even Russia, to the days when owing to preservation it is with some packs impossible, from the number of foxes, to get a good run.⁴ Nor at this point need the newly-invented games be dealt with.

At the back of everything has been the Englishman's instinctive desire to return to the rural atmosphere, and to ignore the town he has been unable to reject. As a seedy, shabby urbanism spread over and defiled the countryside, so the price of his desires rose, and with the price, the snobbery attached to money-values swelled. Here is a quotation from one of the Assistant Commis-

¹ *Economist*, Feb. 29th, 1936, and April 17th, 1937.

² *Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 7th to 11th, 1938.

³ The whole of the Lower Test could be rented for £100 in 1887. In 1894, Test, Itchen and Kennet commanded £100 a mile. There were complaints that owing to agricultural depression, farmers' wives had started breeding ducks, which took the spawn.

⁴ 'The reason why foxes do not make long points now is that they are so seldom to be found six or eight miles from home. They do not travel as they used to do. Why? Because twice as many foxes, perhaps twice too many foxes, are bred.' 'Too Many Foxes', *The Times*, 5th Feb., 1937. Compare this with Osbaldeston in the twenties of the nineteenth century buying foxes: 'Old English foxes, no - French dunghills'. *His Autobiography* (1926) p. 244.

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sioners on the Employment of Children in agriculture in 1867. He refers to 'the present taste for battue-shooting and to satisfy the notion that you have had no sport, unless like Samson with his Philistines, you have slain "heaps upon heaps" . . . The sport of shooting . . . has enhanced within the last 25 years by I know not how much per cent the value of land (I heard of an estate which may extend over 6000 acres, which has changed hands twice within about this period of time. The second purchase money is said to have been £40,000 in excess of the first) . . . The highest ambition of the sportsman is to exhibit from his game-book at the end of the season the greatest aggregate of slaughtered game. Indeed, this document is almost as valuable to the owner of a property as his title-deeds.'¹ Between 1880 and 1889, the number of licences taken out for gamekeepers rose from 600 to nearly 3000.

The transition from a primitive society to an industrial-commercial system had caused the transformation from a leisurely, naturally-rhythmical method of labour to a method whereby man worked harder and with greater concentration over a shorter space of time. As, with the aid of the inelastic machine, the space of working time was diminished, there came into existence a vacuum, called leisure, hitherto unknown among townsmen, although the countryman for some time continued in his traditional ways.

This vacuum was the first evidence of the arrival of English economy at what has been called 'the tertiary

¹ *R.C. on the Employment of Children, etc., in Agriculture, 1867, 1, p. 46.*

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stage', which has been defined by Professor Fisher. 'In the popular phrase, the problems of production in manufacturing seem now to have been solved; it has become possible now to divert an increasing proportion of human time and effort, and of capital equipment into the production of goods and services, which do not fall readily, in the ordinary sense of the word, into the categories of either primary or secondary production . . . namely, facilities for travel, amusement of various kinds, governmental and other personal and intangible services, flowers, art, literature, education, science, philosophy and the like . . . The enjoyment of these services further presupposes an increasing amount of leisure, and it is characteristic of the 'tertiary' period that leisure has in fact played an increasingly important part in the life of the ordinary man.'¹

The first generation to reach it were still under the influence of the subsistence-getting philosophy of their fathers. They felt no need and had not yet been induced to feel any need beyond their 'living and a little more'. They were still at this earlier stage, when they were presented by the machine with a little leisure. Hence their immediate demand was less for additional goods than for

¹ A. G. B. FISHER, *The Clash of Progress and Security* (1935), pp. 28-9. 'The 'primary' stage is defined as one of agricultural and pastoral occupations; the 'secondary' as manufacturing or industrial (pp. 25-6). "The "tertiary" stage begins in the twentieth century.' My own view, as I have tried to show in this chapter, is that the tertiary stage begins considerably earlier; that is, it begins and must begin at the point where a desultory customary manufacture gives way to the discipline of the machine. This discipline, by the demands it makes on the physical and psychological powers of the worker, sets a limit to work, and leisure, as a delimited period, is bound to follow. This is a phenomenon which must affect every society, no matter what its political colour or economic organization, as it advances into the tertiary stage.

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occupation to fill the vacuum. Owing to their numbers, it was impossible for all to take an active part in games and sports, and they fell back on spectacles.

The first step in the advance to the tertiary stage is therefore a demand for services rather than for goods; and in the provision of these services there arose a number of new subsidiary industries.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW MOBILITY

THE new industry of amusement could not have been bred out of the new leisure without the invention of easy and rapid communication. As the towns had grown in population, they had naturally extended their boundaries, absorbing outlying districts, and making land too valuable to be hired for recreative purposes. The railway, feverishly generated during the forties, progressed rapidly. Against the 4646 miles open in the United Kingdom of 1846, there were 13,562 in 1870 and 16,700 in 1886. In 1854, 111 million passengers, exclusive of season-ticket holders, were carried; in the years 1870-74, the annual average was 414 million. In 1885-89, this latter figure had risen to 735 million.¹ The introduction of cheap travel facilities had fulfilled Wellington's gloomy prophecy: 'It only encourages the poor to move about.'

Moreover, the railways were opening up new areas, establishing new ports, founding new industrial towns. There is an almost fantastic display in some of the growths. Between 1831 and 1861, the population of Middlesbrough increased by 2581.3 per cent, of Hartlepool by 1199.7 per cent, of Crewe by 5412.8 per cent. In the next thirty years, to 1891, Bury's population rose by 2507.5 per cent, Normanton's by 1717.8 per cent and

¹ P.P. C-8211, 1896, *Brit. Trade and Production, 1854-95*, p. 26.

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that of Barrow-in-Furness by 934.2 per cent. Of a few specimen towns, the following table shows the increase in actual numbers of inhabitants between 1801 and 1891:

	1801	1891
Middlesbrough	581	76,135
Barrow-in-Furness	954	51,712
Grimsby	1911	56,364
Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo and Tredegar	2239	64,866
Crewe	121	28,761
Hartlepool	1639	64,882
Bury	394	13,272 ¹

New suburbs clustered round and grew out of older towns. Between 1801 and 1891, London's acreage increased from 44,000 to 244,000, and its population from 922,000 to nearly 5½ million. Birmingham took on a belt of satellites, such as Aston Manor and Smethwick. On one side of the Pennines a wedge of contiguous townships was constructed from Liverpool to Saddleworth, on the other a corresponding wedge from Marsden to Wakefield.

The question is where did these inhabitants come from, and how? It is clear that they were not the children and grandchildren of the inhabitants of those places in 1801. No 581 men and women, even were they all as philoprogenitive as Augustus the Strong, could procreate at the rate of nearly 15,000 per cent in ninety years. It was by a process of migration that the new towns came into being and the old towns gathered round their core their new suburban populations. Further, the growth of commerce in the heart of London and in other cities expelled inhabitants from certain districts. The density of popula-

¹ 'The Distribution of Population in England and Wales', by T. A. WELTON; *J.R.S.S.*, Dec. 1900.

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tion lessened, in Westminster from 1841, in Soho from 1871, in Marylebone from 1861, in St. Giles, Bloomsbury from 1841, in Holborn from 1861, in the City from 1801-1811, again from 1821-31 and from 1851 onwards. The people thus expelled moved into the neighbouring growing parishes or else formed part of the new suburban population.¹

As we have seen, the average countryman is by nature averse from movement. All movement in the first half of the century was by short stages, and, on the whole, timid and unadventurous. But in the third quarter of the century, a new fluidity became apparent. 'The improved roads, the facilities offered under the railway system, the wonderful development of mercantile marine, the habit of travelling about, and the increasing knowledge of workmen have all tended to facilitate the flow of people from spots where they are not wanted to fields where their labour is in demand. The establishment of a manufacture or the opening of a new mine rallies men to it, not only in the vicinity, but from the remote parts of the kingdom.'² Thus the Registrar-General in his main report on the census of 1871.

The official generalization was only in part true. For in spite of the, by 1871, heavy concentration in towns, a concentration which would increase during each subsequent decade, the movement of migrants was still, for the most part, what it had always been, short distance. In the classical example of Middlesbrough, with its rise

¹ H. R. PRICE-WILLIAMS, in *J.R.S.S.*, Sept. 1885.

² Quoted by E. G. Ravenstein, 'The Laws of Migration', *J.R.S.S.*, June 1885, p. 167.

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from some 8000 in 1851 to nearly 56,000 in 1881, the records show that in 1861 more than 81 per cent of its inhabitants were born in Yorkshire or in the adjacent county of Durham. In 1871, the proportion was 63.4 per cent and in 1881, 68.3 per cent. On the other hand, it may be noted that of the migrants coming from more distant regions, the areas providing the greatest numbers were mining (coal and iron) counties, Stafford, Northumberland and the South Wales coalfield, possibly workers moving to the Cleveland.

Even more illuminating is an analysis of migrants from Devon and Cornwall drawn from the census of 1881.¹ Nearly one-third of the 240,000 natives who left Devon and Cornwall before the census of 1881 had gone to London. Of the other areas, Somerset, as would be natural in a bordering county, took the next highest group (7.76 per cent), and Somerset in its turn was injecting its own natives into the adjacent Gloucestershire, which also took a proportion (5.14 per cent) of Devon and Cornishmen. But Dorset, a county notorious for bad farming and low wages, retained very few (1.81 per cent): a greater proportion (5.03 per cent) posted on to Hampshire. Most interesting, however, are the more distant areas of absorption. More moved into Monmouth and Glamorgan than stayed in Somerset (8.48 per cent); more into Lancashire (7.4 per cent), while another 7 per cent found homes in Yorkshire and Durham.

From these figures the various reasons for the new settlements can be conjectured. The migrants moved by

¹ RAVENSTEIN, *loc. cit.*, pp. 190-2.

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the easiest routes, either by rail to London, or by road to the next county, or by the cheap and easy sea-routes to South Wales and the North of England. Tin-mining had been declining during the last ten years, and 41 per cent less men were employed in it. It is not improbable that the discarded tin-miners moved to the most easily reached mining areas. It will be recalled that in an earlier age, it was ejection from the home rather than the attraction of work and wages which brought about migration. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, both forces were in operation. As T. H. Marshall, with great insight, has pointed out,¹ movement is a process conditioned, 'not by rational calculation of economic advantages, but by the presence of a certain sensational quality in the appeal. There is romance in the call of London and of the Colonies'. And further, the legendary aura with which a growing locality is endowed endures long after the legend has been dissipated. Thus when in the nineties, the Glamorgan coalfields were passing through a bad period, and 35,000 natives left the county, 94,000 newcomers arrived: 'There was no new legend to check the established flow into Wales.'

In the creation of legends, some share must be allowed to the newspapers. The repeal of the newspaper tax (1855), the paper tax (1858), and the advertisement tax (1853), brought down the costs, and in consequence the prices of news sheets. In 1868, the *Echo* appeared as the first halfpenny newspaper. Thus was information diffused. The conjunction of the railway and the news-

¹ 'The Population of England', *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, v, 2, p. 75.

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paper after the middle fifties provided the link between the labourer expelled from his birthplace by economic forces, and the labour-deficient area summoning him.

At this point another aspect of the general question emerges. It is all very well to speak of labour as a factor of production; but what is labour? It is not merely a pair of hands, a pair of feet, and a brain able to direct and co-ordinate the movements of the working members. Technique is not identical in all trades; no skilled worker could fill a position in another trade without some greater or less measure of experience or training; and indeed the skilled worker of experience in one trade is less easily subject to training in another than the inexperienced man. For this very reason, when his job deserted him, the skilled worker was less likely to move than to wait for trade to revive. In certain cases, where his trade was active in another area; or, more rarely, where his trade was technically allied to another, as was the case above quoted of the Cornish tin-miners, he could move, and probably did so. But the more fluid part of the population was the half-, quarter-, and un-skilled workers, who could turn their hands to any one of the lower grades of industry. It was these who swelled the main stream of migration.

From the forties onward, the mechanization of industry had been gathering speed. The age of empiricism was giving way to the age of exact science. Whitworth, with his true planes, created in the standardization of screws and machine parts the basis for a technical transformation. In 1885 it was written: 'Now every marine engine and every locomotive in the country has the same screw

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for every given diameter. His system . . . has been adopted throughout the world, wherever engines and machinery are manufactured, the dies for the whole series having been originally furnished from his works at Manchester.¹ It is by no means true that standardization was universal at the date of this panegyric; but the Whitworth true planes had led the way to accuracy of measurement which in its turn led to faster-running machinery. By the middle of the eighties, mechanization had been introduced into the worsted trade to the extent that it was on level terms with cotton, into the linen, jute, hosiery and lace industries. Sewing machines had taken over some of the processes of bootmaking. In printing both the linotype and monotype appeared in the mid-eighties. In the coal-mines, winding, ventilation and hauling on the main roads were by machine. The invention of mild steel superseded wrought iron which is only machined with difficulty; and the use of the power-press which had been in existence since 1870 was largely extended.² Many old trades were slowly adopting mechan-

¹ Quoted by CLAPHAM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 75.

² See G. C. ALLEN, *The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country* (1929), Pt. IV, chap. iv, *passim*.

Cf. also evidence in *Second Rep. of the R.C. on Depression of Trade and Industry*, 1886. A manufacturer of steel files speaks of machines worked by two unskilled labourers which displace six or eight skilled labourers (*Q.* 1200). Also the following brief dialogue:

Q. 1445. What becomes of the men who are not employed? – Instead of earning two guineas a week they walk about doing jobs for a sovereign.

Q. 1446. Do they get that simply because the stocks remain large? – They go into other sorts of business and become labourers, and they leave the trade.

Q. 1448. How do they get wages if they leave the trade? – Instead of working as skilled artisans, they become labourers.

Note also the complaints of the introduction of machinery by union secretaries in the following trades (in the Appendix, Pt. II): iron-moulding, straw-plaiting, lace, engineering, joinery, stocking, boot, and leather currying.

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ization in one form or another. In Birmingham, wire, tube-sheet metal, pins, screws, cut-nails, military rifles, ammunition and coining all adopted mechanical processes. Workshops of the old character were being eliminated in favour of the factory, which could employ the labour of the half-, quarter-, and un-skilled migrant.

Moreover, new industries were springing up. The cycle trade for one, followed by the motor car, the electrical industry, the non-ferrous metal trades, are all features of the last twenty years of the century. The new trades required labour; and, since they passed rapidly through the embryo stages from handicraft to mechanization, both they and the older reformed industries required a different type of labour from that wanted in the past. The introduction of machinery led to a further sub-division of labour. Since each further division of labour narrows the field of the worker, and simplifies his task, it follows that a less skilled man can be employed. And, at the same time, with the mechanization, a number of industries can employ labour of the same type. In other words, it is easier for a semi-skilled man to pass from one highly mechanized industry to another of the same nature, than for a skilled man. Thus, beginning in the eighties, and perhaps earlier, it became possible to enlist migratory labour in the new factories where the worker could be employed with the minimum of training. In the end, of course, it led to a cleavage in the ranks of the employed. 'In the nut-and-bolt trade, machinery began to replace hand-forging about 1881, and by 1914, the industry's labour force, instead of consisting mainly

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of skilled smiths, consisted of skilled toolmakers on the one hand, and a mass of machine operatives on the other.¹

It will be seen then that there was in this development a further incitement to mobility of labour, a most desirable economic virtue. Yet at the same time, the country had to pay for it in two ways. By the reduction of industry to two groups, the skilled technicians, and the half- or even quarter-skilled workmen, there was a further cleavage between the classes. In the past, the workshop manager had often been no more than an overhand, a skilled craftsman, more experienced, perhaps, and more reliable than the men he supervised, but nevertheless one of them. Under the new influence he became a man of a different technical and social grade, closer to the owners or directors of the business, with a closer responsibility to them than his predecessor had had, and without the personal contact with the employees on which the old workshop had been run. His business was to keep down costs, and, since labour was no longer a question of long training and personal skill, there was little incentive to bind it to the firm. Conversely, the half-skilled worker was now subject to an uncertainty, a greater precariousness of tenure than the skilled worker who had been his father. He was more victim to the fluctuations of trade, more liable to be turned off. In compensation, he was possibly better paid when in work, able to procure a more varied, if not better, diet than the previous generation, able to purchase amusement, instead of being

¹ ALLEN, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

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forced to make it. He no longer had to suffer deductions for the use of power or light at his work. He was no longer subject to truck;¹ and he worked shorter hours even if he was subject to a regularity of time against which an earlier generation would have rebelled. But he was always liable from now onwards to dismissal at short notice. The problem of the worker in the thirties and forties had been to secure subsistence: the problem of the worker from the seventies onwards was to secure steady employment. In such a state of uncertainty, there was, from the very nature of the circumstances, less incentive to settle down, to make a home, to marry and breed a family.

¹ Yet truck had not been abolished in the distant rural areas or among the surviving handicraft workers. Cf. p. 89.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SOCIAL CLASS

§ I THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

EVERY decade since Waterloo had seen at least one severe crisis, which passed leaving in its track a line of derelict bankrupt firms and destitute men and women. Yet each crisis had been succeeded by fair or moderately fair conditions. So when catastrophe overtook Vienna, Berlin and New York in the summer and autumn of 1873, Englishmen expected the usual recovery, slow and painful though it might be. Their expectations were disappointed. The crashes of that year had little relevance to a change which had been affecting British economy for some time, but the colour of which, in the excitement of the crisis of 1866 and the difficulties of the four following years, had been observed by few.

To put the matter in its briefest form: in the year 1873, the United Kingdom exported goods to the value of £255 million; that figure would not be reached again until 1899. During the same period, the export trades of all the other industrializing countries improved to a considerable degree. The figures shown in the Board of Trade returns¹ run:

¹ P.P. CD-4954, *British and Foreign Trade Industry, 1854-1908* (1909), pp. 58-65.

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	in £ millions	U.K.	France	Germany	U.S.A.
<i>Average</i>	1870-74	235	135	114 (1872-74)	96
	1875-79	202	138	132	125
	1880-84	234	138	153	165
	1885-89	226	132	151	146
	1890-94	234	136	152	184
	1895-99	237	144	191	212

That is to say that, while the value of British exports sank and returned to the same level over the space of a quarter of a century, the value of French exports had risen by 6 per cent, of German by 65 per cent, and of American by 120 per cent. From the high levels of 1873-74, the prices of raw materials, with few exceptions, drooped and declined in an unsteady downward curve. So too did the prices of foodstuffs. With the exception of one year, 1877, British wheat never again touched the 1874 price, or even approached it; nor did barley nor oats. Beef and mutton fluctuated fairly evenly but with a downward sag; and bacon. Except for two brief crises, due to bank failures, the Bank rate averaged barely 3 per cent. There was 'depression of prices, depression of interest, and depression of profits'. Over 1876, 1877, and 1878 the country was driven to repatriate some £20 million of previously exported capital.¹ In 1885, an unwilling government was at last coerced into appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the continuous stagnation, and the Commission produced three heavy folios of remarkable reading matter.

As a direct result of the prolonged depression, there was unemployment of a character to strike even the most

¹ C. K. HOBSON, *The Export of Capital* (1913), p. 223.

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unobservant; in the worst years there were demonstrations, broken windows in the Pall Mall clubs, and conflicts with the police. For the first time (in 1882) the term 'the unemployed' came into use with its modern connotation.

Yet, in contrast, during these years of stagnation and hopelessness, there was on the average a continual increase in the consumption of goods. The rise was possibly uneven; there were in some years recessions: but by 1896, the average, that is the statistical man, was consuming more food and drink and buying more clothes.

1896	100=Average Consumption, 1870-79				
Wheat and Flour	104	Sugar	152	Cotton	104
Cocoa	229	Tea	134	Wool	125
Meat	118	Tobacco	122	Beer and Malt	111

The declines recorded are in coffee (never an English taste), in wines and spirits, and, strange to say, in rice, which had apparently been eaten in quantities in 1881 and 1882.¹ Professor Bowley calculates that between 1860 and 1880, the average working man improved the caloric value of his diet per day from 3240 to 3470 (and between 1880 and 1914 to 3900).² Moreover, the increase was not confined to the staple commodities. Such exotic imports as oranges and lemons were being brought in in ever-increasing quantities. For the figure of just under two million bushels imported in 1870, more than three million came in in 1880, 5.7 million in 1890, and over 10 million in 1899. The banana began to figure as an

¹ Figures from 'Some Statistics relating to Working Class Progress since 1860', by G. H. Wood, *J.R.S.S.*, Dec. 1899, p. 646.

² A. L. BOWLEY, *Wages and Incomes since 1860* (1937), p. 36.

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article of common consumption in the early eighties. The import of cocoa more than doubled between 1873 and 1893. Again, the demand for many other articles hitherto only supplied from local sources was extended to include foreign supplies; between 1870 and 1890, apples, tomatoes and eggs all make their first appearance as regular entrants. Nor is it merely in the entry of new goods that consumption increases. Parallel with this is the increase in variety. An examination of the catalogues of one of the leading stores supplying the middle classes reveals that in all lines of consumption, wines, groceries, soups, soaps, teas, stockings and even dog biscuits, a greater variation of purchase was available. Also it may be noted, although in part the reason is to be found in the growth of urban concentration, the enormous increase in the numbers of those employed in the distribution of foodstuffs, grocers, dairymen, pastrycooks and bakers, greengrocers, fishmongers, amounting to some 26 per cent in twenty years.

Furthermore, during the decades between 1860 and 1900, much active saving was being done by the middle-classes and the small investor. In 1887, Goschen, soon to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, drew attention to the fact that the lowest group of income-tax payers, those with £150-500 a year, had increased in the last decade by over 20 per cent.¹ Where did the savings go? Before 1875, a great deal of capital went abroad. It was the result of an active trade balance. After that date, for at

¹ Reprinted in *Essays and Addresses on Economic Questions, 1865-93* (1905), p. 264 *et seq.*

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least another thirty years, the increase in our foreign investment was, in the bulk, the leaving abroad of the interest on the earlier capital export.¹ No doubt a certain amount of the savings of the middle classes did go this way; although there was a tendency for the investor to prefer the comparatively undeveloped dominions and colonies to more highly developed European countries. But although much of it is not to be traced, a vast amount of capital was being devoted to home development, and to the development of consumption goods. From 1870 to the end of the century, there were small short-lived booms in various commodities, which suddenly took the investor's fancy: an asphalt boom in 1871, one in skating-rinks in 1876-77, another in coffee-houses in 1878-79. In 1885 came the first tentative hints of the safety-bicycle industry (as distinct from the velocipede) which would culminate in the boom of 1896 and the slump of 1897. There is the huge artificial financing of the electric light construction and maintenance companies in 1882. Beyond these, there can be seen from the annual return of the Registrar-General of Companies a definite trend from about 1886 onwards to investment in the production of consumption goods and services. As one runs a finger down the annual lists of enterprises, many of which are no more than a name, many of which die in their early struggles, one is struck by the apparently infinite fertility of ideas in support of which either the general public or private persons have been induced to

¹ 'The Economic Factors in the History of the Empire', by R. PARES, *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, VII, 2, pp. 139-40.

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lend their name or money. Side by side with the proud, up-standing cotton-spinners, shipowners, ironmasters, brewers, and so forth, the kings of the forest, one may find many humbler but more exotic plants, a jumbling mass of projects. There are promoters of 'science, literature and the fine arts', of the 'interests of the builders', of retreats for inebriates, and of musical comedies. There are preservers of lobsters and crabs, and improvers of the breed of Berkshire swine. There are projectors who wish to establish undenominational schools, oyster beds, hydropathics, or brigades of discharged soldiers and sailors to be hired out as carpet-beaters. There are syndicates to supply toboggans, dog-foods, climbing irons, and even intelligence. There are schemes for rearing and dealing in pheasants, and for destroying the refuse of bee-hives. There are manufacturers of the Roller-Coaster apparatus, of scarves, neck-wear and neck-ornaments, of laundry-blue, invalid chairs and gas-lamps, of celluloid collars and cuffs, and of the Derby Patent Hobbyhorses. There are curers of obesity. There are persons engaged in the 'working of bones' (whose, pray?); and many in that truly 'end-activity' which absorbed £5 million a year of the national income, of burial-grounds and cemeteries. Among them all may be discerned those less complicated children of Mammon, who style themselves merely 'capitalists'.

These are but a few samples of the ventures which were offered either publicly or privately to those who had saved money in the last thirty years of the century. Yet they were but a minor part of the projects which were coming

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from the workshops, studios and laboratories during the period. The older-fashioned and more respectable capitalists such as the members of the Royal Commission on the Depression in Trade and Industry regarded the limited liability company as a somewhat dubious expedient for dodging creditors: even through the small print of a Blue-book one can catch the disdain in the phrase 'these concerns'; the speaker views limited liability with the same eyes as Lord Melbourne regarded the repeal of the Corn Laws — 'damned dishonest'. Limited liability had been responsible, so some believed, for the crisis of 1866; why should they not, when the cataclysm of Overend and Gurney was still giving work to lawyers and accountants, and would continue to do so for several years?

Behind the enterprises advertised in the Registrar-General's return, there were many thousands more — ready to provide an expectant public with just what it wanted, but had not thought of — which did not seek the shelter of the Limited Liability Acts. In spite of stagnation of trade, capital was increasing. 'To find productive uses for such a vast increase of capital, it must be put to new forms . . . There was then, and is now, a frontier zone of known devices just below the margin of economical use and capable of absorbing a considerable amount of capital if relative costs become more favourable.'¹ During the last thirty years of the century, the frontier zone was being penetrated at all points by patrols. Some

¹ J. M. CLARK in *American Economic Review*, September 1928, quoted by P. H. DOUGLAS, *Theory of Wages* (1934), p. 213.

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did not get very far; many were wiped out. But a certain, not to be estimated, extension of the frontier was made and consolidated. Beyond lay new zones to be imagined and explored.

Thus there is, superficially, a contradiction; on the one side, there is stagnation of trade and unemployment, on the other, increased consumption and increased saving. These apparently opposing phenomena are reconcilable.

Two factors had been at work in the twenty years previous to the seventies, improvement in the mechanization of industry and improvement in communications. The industrial revolution of which Great Britain had been the pioneer, was exportable. The machinery and mill-work sent abroad in 1850 was valued at £1,042,000; in 1873, it was valued at over £10 million. The British had taught the Continent and America; and the Continent and America had improved on the lessons. The industrial growth of France, Germany and the United States had been partly obscured, partly stimulated, by the wars which had flared up between 1859 and 1871, and by the usual post-war troubles. Not hampered as were the British by the competition of still working but obsolescent machinery, the new countries, in particular Germany and the United States, started with a comparatively clear board. France, with her strong peasant structure and also with her preference for investment in foreign government loans, was less willing and less able to transform, a fact reflected in the comparatively minor growth of her exports. In the U.S.A., the railway had

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pushed its long fingers into the wheat belt; and British freighters completed the wreck of British wheat-growing. By 1880, experiments in refrigeration were successful enough to bring Australian meat to London. Canned meats had appeared in the sixties. On top of this, railway building was nearly completed, while the adoption of steel in place of iron for rail metal meant not only a diversion from the latter but also a smaller replacement market. Prices of every kind of goods in consequence had melted, of pig-iron, railroad iron, tinned plates, woollens and worsteds, linen, coal. The long lead which British industry had held over other countries was rapidly vanishing.

Before the Royal Commission, witnesses raised every kind of reason for the lack of resilience in exports; free importation, railway rates, the incapacity of labour, high wages, shortage of gold, the limited liability company, etc., every plea in short save their own ability to make and market in the face of foreign competition. So long had the British manufacturer dominated the Continent that he had rarely troubled to learn how to sell his goods. As most of the British consuls pointed out in answer to Board of Trade inquiries, the British merchant rarely consulted his customer's needs, or put himself to the trouble to find out. Commercially, he was backward; his catalogues were in English, and his travellers could speak no tongue but their own. The German, French and Belgian commercial travellers were getting the trade because they consulted the customer's desires. 'It is pitiable to see the British commercial traveller stumbling

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along with an interpreter, while his German competitor is conversing fluently; and one is still more sorry for him when his patterns and samples are marked with British weights and measures.¹ No wonder then that by the nineties an appropriate whipping-boy had been discovered in the upstart Germans, and that 'made in Germany' became the stock epithet of contempt for goods which, because they were foreign, must be shoddy.

And yet, in spite of the Germans, in spite of leader-writers, in spite of the doleful witnesses at the sittings of the Royal Commission, in spite of the Political Economy Club, profits were made and continued to be made, and even to increase. If railway iron declined, iron plates and angles for shipbuilding increased; between 1873 and 1883 the output of machinery nearly trebled.² The industrial demand for coal led to an expanded output by some 50 per cent between 1874 and 1894. In quantity, there was continual expansion, of cotton piece-goods, of woollens, of galvanized iron, tin plates and sheets, etc. If profit margins were smaller, England was still the premier producer of iron and steel, of coal, of cotton, and of ships. If she was no longer in a position of semi-monopoly, she was still the largest and far from the least efficient of industrial countries. By the first decade of the twentieth century her commercial education would be as complete as that of her rivals.

These signs had not escaped the notice of the clearer-headed and longer-sighted. In 1884, Giffen (although

¹ P.P. C-9078 of 1898, H.M. Consul in Naples, April 1896.

² 'Investment and the Great Depression', by E. E. Rostow, *Eco. Hist. Rev.*, VIII, 2, p. 147.

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his honesty of purpose has been questioned)¹ was bold enough to address the Statistical Society on the 'Progress of the Working Classes', that is to say in a year when unemployment was once again beginning to swell. It is a commonplace that in times of falling prices, those who remain employed and do not suffer wage-cuts benefit no less than holders of long-term contracts, landlords, debenture-holders, and civil servants, who have nothing save death to fear, and profit by the cheapening of goods; they buy their requirements at lower prices and are able to save. On the other hand, the man who depends on profits, and the unemployed, both lose. Between 1873 and 1896, the estimated percentage of unemployment rose above 10 per cent only in 1879 and 1886; it was above 5 per cent from 1878-80, from 1884-87, and from 1892-95.² (From 1922 to 1933, in only one year, 1927, did the average of unemployment fall below 10 per cent.) But the figures, especially those for the early part of the period, are estimated on the reports of the trade unions, which are imperfect. Furthermore, they apply to skilled trades. Was then unemployment worse than the figures or not so bad? One commentator has declared: 'the percentage of unemployment has a bias in so far as it is probably too low':³ but he offers neither reason nor evidence. On the other hand, Layton and Crowther⁴ write: 'At the most acute times of depression, unemployment apparently rose very much, but, looking

¹ e.g. by S. MACCOBY, *English Radicalism, 1856-1886* (1938), pp. 332-34.

² LAYTON and CROWTHER, *Introduction to the Study of Prices* (1935), p. 265.

³ J. KUCZYNSKI, *Labour Conditions in Western Europe*, 1937, p. 77.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 95.

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at the whole period, there seems to be no evidence that employment was less regular than in preceding periods.' It may be suggested that the Trade Union figures in fact tend to make the situation look worse than it actually was. Labour organized in unions was probably far less mobile, both from trade to trade and from place to place, than labour employed in the as yet un-unionized industries, which, as the newer trades to-day do, took on the younger men. The Unions paid certain out-of-work benefit to their members, which would tend to make them remain in their old occupations, while the non-unionist, having no fund to rely on, sought work of any character anywhere. There was, as was shown by the evidence before the Royal Commission, a certain amount of technological unemployment in the older industries,¹ which were re-organizing. Certain industries were declining or employing fewer hands, agriculture, lace, linen, silk, copper, lead- and tin-mining. But coal-mining, cotton, iron and steel, machine-making, tailoring, printing, furniture, not to mention the foodstuff trades, all increased their personnel enormously between 1871 and 1891.² Between 1871 and 1881, the railway staffs increased by 64 per cent, and by another 34.8 per cent

¹ Cf. Chap. v, p. 129.

	ooo's	
	1871	1891
Coal	315	519
Cotton	508	695
Iron and Steel	191	202
Machine and Ship building	173	292
Tailoring	149	208
Printing	64	121
Furniture	71	101

P.P. CD-1761 of 1903. *Brit. and Foreign Trade and Industry*, p. 362.

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between 1881 and 1891. The census figures for the three dates are 84,900, 139,408, and 186,774. The installation of the telephone drove up the employees of the telegraph service from 2932 to 14,955; and other new or expanding industries, gas, water, electricity, government services, were absorbing greater numbers. Unemployment, therefore, was certainly sporadic, and not general, and a problem rather of shifting workers into expanding industries from moribund trades than of finding employment. The men who found employment easily were those who were most mobile, that is, the unskilled labourers, who could move from trade to trade, and belonged to no organization. The men who were unemployed were the older 'tradesmen', bred to a craft, and only willing to abandon it when desperate, to step down several rungs on the ladder.

Thus the apparent contradiction between stagnant exports with much advertised unemployment, and increased consumption is resolved. While export trades faced severe foreign competition, while obsolescent industries failed to revive, and profits were reduced, while agricultural labourers and skilled artisans emigrated to America and made way for machines, managers and machine-hands, new industries were quietly making small profits and taking on more men. Capital, distrustful of industries that were either dying or frightened of death, preferred to encourage industries which by appealing to a home market could at least remain alive and had no doubts about their expectations of life. The Great Depression of 1873-96 is one of those myths which has

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received more *réclame* than its history deserves. As in the slump after 1929, the consumption goods trades suffered far less than the capital goods trades, and this in due time led to revival of the latter.

§ 2 THE SOCIAL CHANGE

In chapter iv, it was suggested that one of the chief implements to the Ten Hours Movement was the preference of the workers for leisure rather than goods. If then there was a considerable increase in consumption during the latter half of the century, the change in the attitude to goods requires explanation. What had occurred since 1850 to make the average man demand more in the aggregate and also greater variety? Before, however, we proceed to the answer, it may be well to ask whether in earlier periods, changes in demand appeared, and if so, what was the reason for them.

Certainly there had been a change in the dietary of the poorer classes since the middle of the eighteenth century. Between 1750 and 1800, it was observed that in the Midlands and the south, wheaten bread was coming into more general use. In Nottinghamshire in 1796, Arthur Young was noting that while the opulent farmers ate a loaf made of rye, wheat and barley in equal proportions, the labourers insisted on wheat; 'they have lost their *rye teeth*, as they express it'. Eden, also, notes the prejudice against rye in the south of England, although in the counties where wheat was not a practicable crop, the

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people stuck to their own local grain — barley in Cumberland, oats in Westmoreland and on the Border, and so on. What does emerge from the varying accounts is that once the taste for wheat was acquired, it was not lost, and that the worker refused to go back to rye or barley.¹

Another dietary change had been the introduction of tea into the lower-income groups, again only in the south, and probably only in the vicinity of London. 'Any person', wrote Eden in 1797,² 'who will give himself the trouble of stepping into the cottages of Middlesex and Surrey at meal-times, will find that, in poor families, tea is not only the usual beverage in the morning and evening, but it is generally drank in large quantities even at dinner.' It is, however, far from certain that the consumption of tea was due to its being considered an improvement. It is more probable that, even in spite of its high price, it came cheaper to the miserably paid agricultural labourers than did beer, even small beer, after the imposition of the beer tax and the malt duties. Tea was not an amenity; the leaves were used over and over again; it was rather an *ersatz* substitute.

Wheaten bread and tea are the only commodities which may be called amenities among the workers for many years after 1800. The dietary of the poorer income groups was plain and monotonous, and probably unwholesome. It was dictated by price. Oatmeal, herrings

¹ How the labourer came to change over to wheat I am at a loss to explain. England is not a good wheat country. It is possible that the enclosure movement led to an extension of wheat-growing under the influence of wealthy improvers. But wheat prices were not as low in the second as in the first half of the century.

² *The State of the Poor* (1797), I, p. 535.

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and potatoes seem an invariable diet for the northern labourer, with perhaps milk or buttermilk among the agricultural workers on the Borders. Bread, bacon and tea is the diet of the poorest labourers in Buckinghamshire in 1835. In 1842, a boy in the chemical works at Jarrow told the Commissioner¹ that his breakfast consisted of coffee and bread, his dinner of dumplings, bacon and potatoes, although three times a week he got beef or mutton; he had his tea at home, and got no supper. Meat in the forties appears to have been cheap, from 5d. to 6d. a pound, but other articles, and these the most necessary, bread, sugar, tea, etc., were dear.

After 1850, the changes were of a different character. All kinds of new goods and varieties of older ones began to come into general use. Why was it that a standard of living which had not previously changed, and with which the bulk of the population appears to have been content, underwent so wholesale a transformation? Two characteristics of the growth of an industrial civilization appear to be the engines of the change. The first is the increased rapidity of communications. Before the coming of the railway, every nucleus of humanity, hamlet, village, town or city, drew almost entirely on the surrounding country for its provisions, the radius of its requisition being relative to its population. In the fifteenth century, one area might starve while another was in possession of a surplus. If the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries succeeded in curbing wholesale

¹ *Children's Employment Commission, App. to Second Rep.* 1842, P.P. 1843, xv, p. 288.

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famine, they did not solve the problem of shortage of articles of consumption which dieticians of to-day would regard as essentials. It was not until the railway had linked the main areas of production that the problem of transference was solved. More than this, the railway enabled goods to be created in larger quantities and distributed over wider areas. It thus abolished local fluctuations in supply, which now became continuous. The unfailing capacity of the wholesale manufacturer to produce and of the wholesale dealer to supply, in the end defeated the local grower and manufacturer, dependent on the uncertainty of the seasons and a limited area. The retailer learned to rely on those who could at all times guarantee supply. This in turn tended to make smaller fluctuations in price, and thus to make, if not the whole country, at least wide areas, a single market. The result was that chaffering and bargaining for goods disappeared as each district was conquered by the wholesale trade. In London, the fixed price became normal in the forties. In the next two decades it spread to the provinces. By the seventies it was normal for all save privately-manufactured goods. The change is registered by the growing number of specialized trade magazines in the seventies. The consequences were twofold. With a wider potential market, manufacturers were able to cut costs and lower prices; thus there was an incentive to cheapen both through increased production and also through the sophistication of goods. Secondly, a greater variety of goods was made available to a larger consuming public, and at cheaper prices.

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The greater availability of goods does not by itself explain increased consumption. There is no reason to suppose that consumers will buy goods merely because they are offered at prices within the range of their purse; they must also desire them. The desire for goods was the result of urban concentration. The appalling sanitary conditions of the thirties and forties had forced on the municipalities improvement in the administration of the towns. Not only were drainage, lighting, paving, etc., taken in hand; but parts of the towns were rebuilt. The older cottages were broken up to make way for factories and offices, while the influx of migrating labour led to the extension of suburbs. This flow to the periphery from both within and without is most clearly visible in Greater London. In addition, there was clearing of the worst areas, and the building of tenements by such men as Peabody and Waterlow. The new buildings commanded higher rents; thus the tenants were, whether they liked it or not, committed to a higher expenditure, and thus to a higher standard of living.¹

It is therefore in the natural order of events that the advertisement of consumption goods to the mass of the population should begin its real development in this *fin de siècle* era. Up to the fifties, advertising was little better than a crude notification of the existence of certain goods and services. The handbill and the poster on hoardings were (apart from the pedlar) the

¹ Cf. R.C. *on the Housing of the Working Classes*, P.P. 1884-85, xxx. St. Pancras model lodgings, 3-4 rooms, at 4s. 6d.-8s. 6d. a week, occupied by superior artisans, policemen, and railway servants of 28s.-30s. a week wages (Q.Q. 1593-95); Goswell Road, 3s. 6d.-5s. a week for single rooms (Q. 1435); Peabody Buildings, at 6s.-8s. a week, considered too expensive.

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nearest approach to selling to the public yet devised. Press advertising was restricted by the newspaper tax, the paper tax, and the advertisement tax. It was not until these taxes were taken off in the fifties, that advertising through the newspaper was free to develop. Again, until the newspaper was distributable to the poorer income groups, there could be no advertising to the mass public. Until the cheap newspaper could offer a widespread circulation, advertising on a large scale must be and was devoted almost entirely to the demands of the wealthier classes. The *Echo*, the first halfpenny evening paper, starting in December 1868, carried no advertisements on its front page, six inches of small advertisements on page 2, three inches on page 3, and five columns on page 4. The tone of the advertising (insurance, publishers, watches, cough drops, cutlery, wines and spirits, *Whitaker's Almanack*, tea and cocoa, and clothing) is coloured to appeal chiefly to the middle classes.¹ The *Evening News*, first published in July 1881, addressed its appeal to a poorer class, advertising bicycles, tricycles and sewing-machines on what were virtually hire-purchase terms. And a further bid was made for the support of the lower income groups with the publication of the Saturday football supplement in 1892.² In 1891, the first advertising-trade paper started — *Fame*. It did not last very long, but long enough to tell retailers that they did not understand advertising, and to point out the virtues of display

¹ It may be noted that although racing results are printed, starting prices are not.

² 'W. W.' in the *Spectator* of Nov. 12th, 1891, p. 529, speaks of a Lancashire village of 1200 souls with three newsagents selling 150 halfpenny newspapers a day. The readers demanded fiction and accounts of football matches.

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in few and large words, in order to reach the poorer and less literate classes. Manufacturers, however, knew what they were about. The second *Daily Mail*¹ carried such displays as a double column devoted to Vi Cocoa, a half-double to Bovril, a half column to Vinolia Soap. Soon after the turn of the century, the respectable front page, originally as demure as the news page of *The Times*, gave way to half-page-bottom displays. *Les Gaudissart les plus illustres* had arrived. The stimulation of the consumer to buy and go on buying had become the most prominent feature of British journalism.

Everything had favoured the new trade.² The Education Act of 1870 had given, with the best intentions in the world, one more impulse to the vain materialism against which that misunderstood prophet, Matthew Arnold, had battled with a prescience the twentieth century can generously acknowledge. The difference between education and culture is the difference between a synthetic liqueur and a natural wine. There is a mass of evidence of every type to show that the working men of England who grew up before 1870 were the possessors of a culture, a mode of life, their grandchildren would not know. 'The truth is this,' said Cobbett, 'this talk about education of the people is a piece of insolence arising out

¹ The first began in Feb. 1896. It was bought by Alfred Harmsworth about three months later, and transformed.

² Perhaps it should not be called new. Advertisement is, of course, very old, as old as any other propaganda. There were advertisement agents in the twenties. *The Times* carried a full-page advertisement of Edmund Lodge's Portraits in 1829. There were crude attempts at display in the sixties. *The Times* opened an advertising office in 1874. But it was not until the halfpenny paper for the masses arrived that real direct-to-the-consumer advertising could be said to exist. Much of course was due to American methods, which were earlier, and, for obvious reasons, brisker.

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of the stupid pride of idlers, whose knowledge consists in books, or the contents of books.¹ Cobbett had in mind the villagers and crofters he knew, most of whom could read, and many write, who pondered what they read and knew the technique of their craft inside out. His view was borne out by such men as the Poor Law Commissioners and the Factory Inspectors. In 1850, Alexander Redgrave, perhaps one of the most observant of the latter, quoted in his report with approval a passage from Samuel Laing's *Observations*, which ran: 'The labouring man in England, although more ignorant, is more civilized in his tastes and wants than the continental man of the same station in life. His tastes, habits, wants, are on a higher scale. His ignorance, even, is principally in matters without his own sphere of action; but in matters within it, in all that regards his craft and business, he is more clever, acute and knowing than the more educated man of the same trade abroad.'² This view is sustained by the observation of a contemporary of our own day, speaking of the members of the poorer income groups whose childhood was before the first Education Act was on the Statute Book. '... the number who could read was not very much less than it is to-day. But, anyhow, the older England was not illiterate. Of the dependents of my relatives, all read the Bible, many the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The difference between the older England and the newer England is that by now people have fallen into the habit of *perpetual* reading, which in the better days the great mass of English men and

¹ *Twopenny Trash*, May 1831, p. 243.

² P.P. 1856, xviii.

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women did not.¹ Before the Education Act of 1870, reading was not a matter of dope, but an intellectual exercise. The Act and its successors, with their curricula and their uniformity, and above all with their low standard of teaching and demand on their pupils, created a mass mind, a superficial receiving set, prepared to accept what it could most easily receive, and to abrogate the function of reason.²

The fluidity of English society has been a constant theme of social historians. The ascent of individuals and families from the lowest social groups to the highest has been a commonplace of English life. As the late Horace Round pointed out, the greatest names in the peerage owe their advancement to trade or marriage. All along it has been a matter of money: in England, money takes the place of caste. In the eighteenth century, there had been temporarily a territorial aristocracy, and a large part of the influence in government had been with the House of Lords. But the economic and social position of the territorial magnates, the men who had been not only petty kings on their own estates and dispensers of seats in the House of Commons, but also patrons of architecture, painting and literature, was gradually undermined. The lawyers made the first breach; the commercial men of the City of London, the West India interest, the East India Company, the bankers, made the second. They were followed by the medical men (Creevey's phrase,

¹ HILAIRE BELLOC, *New Statesman*, March 29th, 1930.

² Since writing the above, I have come across, in *Mein Kampf*, the dictum that the great majority of readers are persons who believe everything they read. How right the Führer is!

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'squirting apothecary' of the *arriviste* Addington, conveys to perfection the aristocrat's scorn of the doctor's trade), and then by the manufacturers and by the country squires, whose farms were swallowed to their profit by the spreading cities, or sold at exaggerated prices to the railway companies. At a later date may be noted the arrival of the engineer and the contractor, designations which more often than not appear to mask the less savoury words, 'company promoter'. Before the arrival of these last, however, came the throwing open of the Civil Service to public competition, and such minor, but none the less leavening novelties, as the opening of the Universities to Nonconformists, the abolition of 'purchase' in the Army, the widening of the membership of the Stock Exchange.¹ The transitory sway of the territorial aristocracy had passed. Early in the nineteenth century it became aware of the danger of its imminent isolation, and allied itself by the ties of marriage with the newcomers. There was a merging of the old and new plutocracies; the former accepted seats on the boards of companies;² the latter bought country estates; and as a sign of the times, the rents of deer-forests and grouse-moors leaped upwards. For the future, aristocracy, if so ideal a word may be employed, would be measured less in the weight of rent rolls than in stock, shares, and directorates.

With the sixties, seventies and eighties came the rise of the professional classes, a rise reflected in the income tax

¹ Membership, 1864, 1100; 1878, over 2000. *Stock Exchange Report*, P.P. 1878, xix.

² The phrase 'guinea-pig director' was minted in 1887.

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assessments.¹ But one group rarely rises without assisting or without the assistance of others. The benefits seeped downwards to the retailing and parts of the minor clerical classes. Parallel with their rise, the complexity caused by the increasing subdivision of labour was splitting the industrial workers into two economic groups, one of skilled technicians, the other of machine-minders. In the pre-scientific period, foremen had, as a rule, been of the same grade as the workers in the shop; they were superior and senior artisans. In the new age, as we have seen, they would be of a different grade, and those from whom they split off would fall to the level of half-, quarter-, or un-skilled workers. Thus the social pattern was becoming a reflection of the economic.

It would, however, be erroneous to suppose that the 'statistical man', whose consumption was increasing, was representative of the whole working class. Charles Booth's famous survey of the London workers of the late eighties dispels such a belief. The increased consumption was due to the emergence of the upper economic group of industrial workers, the new lower middle class, the product of the secondary and technical schools, a grade of worker without the tradition of the older 'tradesman'. With the rise in real income due to the technical revolution of the seventies and eighties, there came in this new class a change in the attitude to expenditure; and their expenditure was no longer bound by the habits of a population which thought in terms of mere subsistence.

¹ R. GIFFEN, *Economic Studies and Inquiries* (1904), II, p. 99, and GOSCHEN, *op. cit.*

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In Senior's phrase, the luxuries of one generation had become the decencies of the next. The beneficiaries of the new standard of comfort increased with the increase of *carrières ouvertes aux talents*. There were fewer obstacles to elevation to the higher social grades or at least to colourable imitations of them. Imperceptibly and unconsciously a great mass of the people was being impregnated with the instinct of competition, in rank, in style, in expenditure, which, as every right-minded person knows, are the outward and visible signs of inward grace, a doctrine descended through many metamorphoses from the Puritans. The old idea of subsistence living was disappearing; it survived only in the agricultural districts. In the towns the spirit of emulation essential to material progress was by the end of the century firmly implanted.

By the end of the Great Depression the English — and with them, Americans, Germans, and other Europeans of the north and north-western continent — had advanced a long way into the 'tertiary stage' of economy. In the past, invention had been directed to the saving of capital, land and labour. In the future, it would direct a large proportion of its energy to the development of consumption goods and services.

We have seen that many new services in the field of amusement developed with the coming of assigned leisure. During the eighties, new goods were being evolved, the bicycle, the motor car, the phonograph. The final effective consumer was rising as the director of economic life in the coming century. And he was encouraged by leaders of thought. 'A desire on the part of

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the working classes', said that enlightened contractor, Sir Thomas Brassey, 'for the fuller enjoyment of the blessings of civilization not only tends to their moral advancement, but promotes the material progress of the country.'¹ Stimulated and encouraged by the popular newspaper and the advertising trade, trained by an appropriate educational system to receive such messages, the emerging classes were quick to recognize the blessings of civilization. Material progress was to have logical consequences unimagined by Sir Thomas Brassey.

¹ *Lectures on the Labour Question* (1878), p. 4.

CHAPTER VII

THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND POPULATION PROBLEM

YET strangely enough, the effects of increasing consumption had been discerned, if not in their fullest implications, above fifty years. 'The friends of humanity', Ricardo, that eminent ally of Malthus, had written in his *Principles of Political Economy*, 'cannot but wish that in all countries the labouring classes should have a taste for comforts and enjoyments, and that they should be stimulated by all legal means in their exertions to procure them. *There cannot be a better security against a superabundant population.*'

To state these effects in their crudest form, British married couples began to lower the average number of children they had had in the past. There was evidence of a possible fall of reproduction in some areas very early. In some counties the peak of the gross reproduction rate was reached as early as 1851. By 1911, in not one single county was it as high as it had been in 1891. After 1881 the population as a whole did not increase at its previous pace. By 1931, it had ceased to produce enough children even to maintain itself at its then level. 'The gross reproduction rate of England and Wales is now less than unity:'¹ i.e. a net reproduction rate at which dying population is

¹ 'The Effect of the present Trends in Fertility and Mortality upon the future Population of England and Wales', by ENID CHARLES. *R. Eco. Soc. Special Memo.* No. 55, 1935.

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replaced. This downward trend began to appear after 1851, became clearer after 1871, and became obvious to those who knew what to look for, after 1881.

A decline in the gross reproduction rate may be a perfectly natural phenomenon. A serious catastrophe which segregates the sexes, for example the war of 1914-18, will temporarily prevent the conception of children. An elderly population will in the course of nature have fewer children than a youthful one. But the population structure of England and Wales in the nineteenth century contains no excess of elderly age-groups; the number of women between the ages of 15 and 45 increased absolutely in every decade. Even allowing for the losses by emigration in the last four decades of the century, and for the fact that the majority of these must be taken to come from the under 40 years age groups, the proportion is small in an increase of $12\frac{1}{4}$ million.

One source of inquiry at once presents itself, the marriage rate.¹ Looking back over the period between 1850 and 1900, there appears a relation between marriage and the economic situation. The peak of marriage frequency occurred, as would be expected, in the year 1873; thereafter it declined and recovered up to the end of the century, corresponding almost accurately with the state of trade. The pits of the marriage rate between 1873 and

¹ I have used throughout this chapter *Political Arithmetic*, ed. by Dr. L. HOGGEN (1938), and in particular two chapters by Mr. D. V. GLASS, Research Secretary of the Population Investigation Committee, viz.: 'Changes in Fertility in England and Wales, 1881-1931', and 'Marriage Frequency and Economic Fluctuations'. References will be made to *Political Arithmetic* with the appropriate page number. In this particular instance I use the refined marriage rate devised by Mr. Glass, which is based on the number of marriages per 1000 unmarried males and over, standardized for the age-group 20-44.

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1900 were in 1879, 1886 and 1893.¹ These three were the worst years of the Great Depression, the years when 'unemployment, as it was then understood, was at its worst. The depths of the curve have a somewhat similar correspondence in the earlier 'Golden Years' of 1851-73, namely in 1855, the year of the Crimean War, in 1858, a year of crisis, and in the years 1867-70.² One is led to the conclusion that uncertain economic conditions in each of these years or groups of years led to the postponement of marriage.

Postponement does not mean that the marriages will not take place. They may be deferred for longer than the immediate crisis may appear to warrant; but the deferment does not lead to permanent celibacy. The length of the postponement depends on the severity of the crisis and its local repercussions; since these are judged subjectively, no one can decide what the length of the delay may be. All that can be seen is that after the worst of the crisis is past, the marriage rate recovers. There is no reason to suppose that these temporary postponements will affect the size of the family without other and more compelling reasons.

The observer of the latter half of the century will per-

¹ *Political Arithmetic*, p. 269.

² Of the last two, the earlier crisis occurred in October-November 1857, but recovery was slow, and the impact of the crisis only hit the manufacturing trades in the following year. That of 1866, which occurred in May, hardly affected trade before the end of the year; it was largely an internal financial crisis: but other circumstances, including a series of bad harvests, meant bad trade until the end of 1869, and the revival of the early part of 1870 was injured by the Franco-Prussian War of the autumn. It should be remembered that postponement of marriage is not short term in slump periods. 'Judging from the German experience (of 1930-33) there is good reason to believe that marriages may be postponed for considerably more than a year' (*Political Arithmetic*, p. 261).

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ceive that whereas up to 1873, both nuptiality and reproduction are buoyant, after that date there is a hesitation about marriage, while after 1881 a decisive decline in reproduction has set in.¹

In normal circumstances in which there is year by year a continuous and increasing entry of young people into the period of fertility, and in which each year more pass their fifteenth birthday than pass their forty-fifth, there is nothing to prevent an increasing number of children being born. These were the circumstances of Great Britain during the latter half of the nineteenth century. If then reproduction slows down, if the average number of children born to each marriage grows smaller, then it is probable that there has been some impulse which causes married people to refrain from having children. What is to be sought is the reason for this limitation.

In certain groups, restriction had been in operation for a long time. In England and Wales, in the ranks of the peerage, a numerically minor group, reproduction had been falling for more than half a century. The vast broods of children whose names stud the labyrinthine pages of Collins in the eighteenth century, contracted in the early nineteenth. Gores, Stewarts, Noels and Custs no longer begot their fourteens and sixteens. No Lady Oxfords produced their Harleian Miscellanies. The days of vast rent-rolls began to pass with the agricultural interest, and the preservation of family estates entailed the limitation of the family.

These considerations do not seem to have affected the

¹ *Political Arithmetic*, Charts, pp. 178-9.

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heirs of the future. Few of the middle classes appear to have deliberately limited their families earlier than the sixties.¹ But when the change came, it came quickly, affecting not only the rich but the poor. In the last generation of the nineteenth century, there is a clearly marked transformation of the attitude to the family in the minds of a great part of the population. Limitation has begun to spread to all classes.

What were the influences which caused this impulse to restrict the family? A change in a social attitude is rarely due to one cause. It has been suggested that the main cause has been one, the more widely diffused knowledge of contraceptives. But in fact there was no sudden revelation of their existence. Whatever improvements in the methods of birth control had been made in these years, were made in response to an already existing effective demand. Control of population existed in the most primitive societies. Contraceptives of a primitive nature were employed long before the Christian era, apart from folk practices and taboos of all natures. Contraceptives were advertised in England in the late eighteenth century.² The mind of the population was prepared for family limitation by the wide diffusion of Malthusian doctrine. The Radicals of the twenties and thirties, looking at the ever increasing population, believed that its control could only be exercised by late

¹ This, I admit, to be largely conjecture drawn from no more than a very small sample of rich or moderately rich middle-class families I have been able to check.

² For the history of birth-control methods, see 'Medical History of Contraception', by NORMAN E. HINES, *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 15th, 1934.

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marriages; but since man's lusts will not be harnessed, late marriages would only serve to increase prostitution. They therefore recommended no delay in marriage and the use of preventatives. Malthus cast a long shadow; and the ordinary educated man of the thirties and forties believed his threats.¹ One may note the first use of the phrase 'the masses' by Tom Moore in 1837, and the inflection of fear contained in the word in contrast to the earlier contemptuous 'the mob'. Place, Mill and Carlile kept alive the question and did what they could to increase knowledge of birth control. By the seventies, contraceptives were being freely advertised, while cruder methods, which have persisted to this day, were well known to the poorer classes. It has been claimed that the trial of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant in 1877 started the movement for birth control.² The claim is ill-founded. The reprinting of Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People*, which occasioned the prosecution, had taken place at intervals since its original publication in 1832. While the publicity given by the prosecution, according to Mrs. Besant's testimony, drove sales from 700 up to 120,000 copies a year, there emerged from the evidence sufficient to warrant the conviction that birth-control practices were far from unknown and were followed both by rich and poor.³ This is supported by more impressive evidence unconnected with the trial.

In 1871, six years before the trial, in 15 out of the 55

¹ e.g. by 'A Correspondent' in *The Times*, Oct. 18th, 1938.

² *The Times*, June 21st, 1877, and subsequent days.

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registration counties, the peak of the gross reproduction rate had been passed. In 12 others, the peak came in 1881. It is impossible to believe that as a result of a single trial, however widely advertised, that a number of counties, 12, suddenly became birth-control minded. It is far more probable, as Mr. Glass says, that the trial merely crystallized an inchoate public opinion already dimly favourable to the limitation of the family.¹

The problem therefore comes back to the various material and spiritual influences which contributed to this change of social outlook. In the first place, all through the history of this country the family had been the economic unit. Until marriage, and frequently after it, the income of the earners was a family income. The child in one way or another ceased early to be a dead-weight expense, and was in some small way a contributor to the common stock. 'The men will let the children go [into the mines] as soon as they are big enough to addle any wages.'² In some districts, for example in the Potteries, this outlook survived long after the Factory Acts had been in force. 'Supposing a man with a wife and six children who earned 16s. or 18s., as it might be 20s. a week, and there are many such in the Potteries; how was he to do if his children were not allowed to go to work till they were ten or eleven years old?'³ Nevertheless, between 1850 and 1867 the steady withdrawal of children under 10 years of age was being accomplished.

¹ D. V. GLASS, 'Marriage Frequency and Economic Fluctuations', in *Political Arithmetic*, p. 279.

² R.C. on *Children's Employment (Mines)*, P.P. 1842, xvi, p. 65.

³ *Children's Employment Commission*, First Report, P.P. 1863, xviii, p. xliii.

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Although nearly 40,000 were shown to be employed by the census of 1861 (there are none in that of 1871), the economic importance of children was already diminished by that date. In short, the child had ceased to be an economic asset to its parents during its first ten years.

To this should be added the influence of the Education Acts. That of 1870 did not make schooling free; it merely offered assistance to local authorities. The Act of 1876 made schooling compulsory but did not absolve the parent from payment. It was not until 1891 that school fees were abolished. Thus from 1876 to 1891, parents of the poorest income-groups bore a small tax on children, infinitesimal it may seem in the individual mulcting, but irksome in the aggregate. Twopence a week may seem little, but to an agricultural labourer with six children earning 11s. or 12s. a week, one shilling was a serious handicap.

To these two materialistic views must be added the weight of social reform agitation. The moral iniquity of the employment of children had been a favourite theme of radical reformers since the end of the eighteenth century. Such repeated drumming will, like the water torture, penetrate the numbest skull. There was thus built up the idea of the duty of parents towards their children, reciprocal to the accepted doctrine of the Decalogue of the duty owed by children to their parents. Moreover, among the workers, the children who came of age during the sixties and seventies were the last of those whose early life had been passed under the older regime. Ill-schooled though they had been, they were not immune

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from the glorious intoxication of Tennysonian and commercial optimism. The communication of an idea may require any span of time from a decade to a millennium; the rapidity of its acceptance depends on its utility. The expansion of invention, the employment of new materials and of new substitutes for old ones, showed that opportunity was there for those who had the agility to use it. In the sixties, seventies and eighties, opportunities were appearing for children which had hitherto been invisible. Some, probably many, of these openings demanded a higher training than openings of the past. If children were to be able to seize these opportunities, more money must be spent on their education or training and they must be dependent longer on their parents; thus there must be saving, and the easiest method of saving is to restrict the number of dependants. It is not difficult to imagine some such line of reasoning in the minds of those who as children had known the harshness of the forties and fifties.

Almost as early as it became dog-conscious, the country was becoming child-conscious. The change in attitude can be traced in literature from the severe moralities of Harriet Martineau through the sentiment of Charles Dickens to the sentimentalities of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *A Child's Garden of Verses* and *The Golden Age*, all books addressed to adults.

It has been suggested that the cause, or one cause, of family limitation lies in the entry of women into industry and commerce. Technical difficulties make a correct assessment of the share of women in industrial and com-

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mercial occupations difficult. It is a popular belief that the proportion of women employed in some form or another is considerably higher to-day than formerly. The belief is not justified by facts. There has been little change in the proportions between 1871 and 1931. Such changes as have taken place have been between age-groups and between occupations. In 1871, 2.3 million of the women over 20 were occupied out of a total of 6.4 million, some 35 per cent. In 1931, the respective figures were 4.0 million and 14 million, or 30 per cent. During the sixty years, the percentage of occupied women over the age of 25 has diminished, while that of those between 20 and 25 has increased.¹ In other words, although a higher proportion of young women takes up work than in the earlier period, retirement from business is earlier.

Significant changes have taken place in the type of work. Whereas in 1871, 5.8 per cent of occupied women were engaged in agriculture, in 1931 the share was only 1.1 per cent,² while those engaged in commerce and distribution rose from 4.9 per cent to 19.5 per cent. Other significant declines are those in the number of domestic servants (from 35.7 per cent to 26.2 per cent) and of dress hands (from 25.8 per cent to 10.8 per cent). The declines have thus taken place in the customary and handicraft trades; the increase in the capitalized industries. The three main occupations of women in 1871 were agriculture, domestic employment and the clothing trade,

¹ *Political Arithmetic*, p. 199 *et seq.*, by D. V. GLASS.

² *ibid.*, loc. cit. The main fall came by 1891.

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which employed 67.3 per cent of the total of all occupied women over 20. In 1931 they employed only 38.1 per cent. Not one of these three occupations offers to those engaged in it such dazzling rewards as to compete with offers of marriage. Moreover neither agriculture nor a great part of the clothing trade of the seventies demanded of their employees either the same application or the same rigidity of hours as do the factory, the shop or the office. In both it was possible for a woman to marry and have children and continue in her occupation. Mr. Glass concludes his statistical summary by the consideration that 'whereas marriage and employment were not competing fields in 1851, employment at the present time tends to cause women not to marry, or at least to postpone marriage'. By another route, the same proposition can be reached. Domestic industry never interfered with marriage. Domestic servants leave their places to marry. Dressmakers and women working in the fields marry as opportunity offers. As the functions of these classes disappeared, new occupations rose, some of which offered in place of subsistence, high rewards and personal ambition, others which by their rigidity demanded the whole time of their followers.

A further factor influencing the decline of the family was the new mobility. The internal and external migrations of the population indicate that in many areas there was no absorption of the growing population into local agriculture or industry. Not only was ejection taking place, but easy means of removal were now present, while at the end lay such areas as Durham and South

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Wales which could absorb the unemployed worker. This fluidity of population, the movement from one town to another, from one county to even the next, meant in the long run the weakening of the idea of the family, and therewith of the conception of the family as an economic unit. Although the family wage is still employed as a term, and has been injected with new life by the Unemployment Assistance Board, the family, as an economic unit, which is a wholly different thing, is disappearing. The family wage implies the earnings of the family as a whole engaged in the same *métier*. With not only the fluidity of population, but also the variation of occupation, the family wage as an ideal concept was bound to disappear. It has, of course, continued to some extent in areas wholly devoted to a specific occupation, in agriculture, in cotton, in coal-mining; but in the less homogeneous areas it is no more. Thus it is logical that the idea of the family should be weakened by nomadism and that the acceptance of reproduction as the norm of life should be refused.

Beyond this, the rapid increase in the size of towns was making it more and more difficult for families to grow. Space alone set a limit to pullulation. The activities of the successors of the Board of Health, the Home Office and Privy Council, and, after 1871, the Local Government Board, were driving into the heads of an increasingly urban population the lesson that overcrowding and lack of sanitation meant epidemics, cholera and other fevers.¹

¹ Particularly the Sanitary Act of 1866, which made overcrowding a nuisance and forced sanitary inspection on local authorities.

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At the same time it must be remembered that at least so far as London is concerned the lack of space was causing a new type of architecture. Of the capitals of Europe, London alone had grown outward and not upward. Paris and Berlin still remained largely within their ancient *enceintes* and made shift with the apartment house; London, with its defensive walls long destroyed, had never yet descended to this method. Now in the seventies the problem of the rise of ground rents coupled with the spread of the metropolis demanded a solution by which the worker of whatever grade he might be could live within reach of his work at a reasonable rent. The tenement was designed for the poorer workers and built; and then after much controversy over the immorality of domestic servants¹ the tenement was refined into the apartment; blocks of flats for the middle classes began to be built, incidentally furnishing an example of a poor man's good being adapted by the wealthy. That these new buildings affected the growth of poor families is unlikely, but they may very possibly have affected the reproduction of the middle classes.² With the best will in the world, it was impossible for a wealthy citizen domiciled in a flat of the eighties to maintain his self-respect and beget the progeny his father had.

A further influence which must be admitted is the

¹ Which may be read by the historian of manners in that most enlightened weekly, *The Builder*.

² How far this is a permanent influence it is difficult to judge. The urban-rural ratio has all over the world been in favour of the country, until recently, but has now drawn closer. Further, Germany, where the towns are larger than in England, has now a rising reproduction rate, although possibly this will not continue to rise.

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growth of rationalism. The stones cast by Darwin and Huxley into the pond of conventional thought in the fifties, created ripples which, on those placid waters, resembled a tidal wave. Their lapping in due time changed the shape of the banks. It broke down some of the prejudice, some of the superstition which had held the minds of the forties in awe of a jealous deity. How far it inclined the attitude of the ordinary citizen to a more critical view of the function of the body, it is impossible to conjecture; but it is credible that the controversies left at least a formidable and growing number of ordinary men and women convinced, without any profound thought about it, of the supremacy of this world and its material goods.

Yet of all the influences contributing to the decline of reproduction, it may be suggested that none was more powerful than the growth of the amenities of life. With this must be coupled the further social stratification arising out of the complex organization of an industrially progressive State.¹ The growth of wealth had infected all classes with the itch to succeed. Wealth had seeped downwards as more goods were produced requiring more hands, while, at the same time, each step in the social structure had broadened. Opportunities had been opened in the second half of the century such as had not been sighted since Henry VIII regulated

¹ Although not necessarily 'industrial'. France, unwillingly dragged onwards by her neighbours east and west, an agricultural state with a strong sense of material possession, had experienced a declining birth-rate since perhaps the Revolutionary Settlement and the setting up of the Code Napoléon. It is the strong sense of material possession which offers the powerful motive to limit the family.

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the Church to the benefit of the laity. 'Strong as is the desire for variety, it is weak compared with the desire for distinction; a feeling which if we consider its universality and its constancy, that it affects all men and at all times, that it comes with us from the cradle and never leaves us until we go into the grave, may be pronounced to be the most powerful of human passions.'¹ The later Victorians recognized that although more opportunities had opened, the number of candidates had increased at a greater speed. They saw the barriers between the social classes diminishing, but they did not perceive why. Each class resented as plebeian the class pushing upward from below. While the genteel du Maurier resented Sir Gorgius Midas with the timorous ferocity that Whig patricians had displayed towards the medical profession and the cotton masters, the Anglican detested Nonconformity more for the social grade it sprang from than for its religious tenets. The contempt of the banker for the stockbroker, of the brewer for the jeweller, was reflected in that of the shopkeeper and the clerk for the mechanic and the manual labourer. To push one's way up the social stairway, one must not only be powerful; one must be thought to be powerful. One must, in short, advertise oneself by a better house, by more generous entertainment, by newer and richer clothes — not lavishly, of course; that indicated the *arriviste*, the diamond millionaire, the American railway magnate. But if the desire for variety of possession is weak compared with that for distinction,

¹ Nassau Senior, quoted by ALFRED MARSHALL, *Principles of Economics*, 8th ed., p. 87.

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variety is also the only means of distinction open to those undistinguished by talent, rank or office. In the last thirty years of the century *conspicuousness by purchase* was gaining ground rapidly by a reciprocal movement. Whereas in the ordinary theory of economic process, profits should in time reach the equilibrium point of the expenses of management and the cost of money, the invention of a new consumption good, if it is successfully marketed, will offer positive profits. There is thus an incentive to the invention and production of new toys for the consumer. On the other side, the possession of a new invention, electric light in place of gas or oil lamps, the telephone, the bicycle, the phonograph, the asphalt tennis court, offered to the purchaser conspicuousness. Similarly the desire for variety required constant change. Hence the invention of new types of stuffs, of new modes, of new fashions in shoes, clothes, hats and hairdressing (the number of hairdressers more than trebled between 1861 and 1891), in part imitated by the poorer classes through the invention of substitutes, the 'sophistication' of goods, the production of materials from waste. If, as G. M. Young has written of the fifties,¹ 'the European mind . . . saw stretching before it the endless new world which Bacon had sighted or imagined', the reality turned out to be something different from that which early nineteenth-century philosophers had dared to descry. While those employed in education rose from 95,000 to 217,000 in 1901, a gain of 129 per cent, the number of those engaged in the theatrical and entertainment indus-

¹ *Victorian England* (1936), pp. 18-19.

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tries increased from 4500 in 1871 to nearly 26,000 in 1901, an increase of 477 per cent. It was with a sense of the age in which he lived that Veblen, surveying his American society, still too young to produce a culture of its own, and forced to borrow from Europe, published his *Theory of a Leisured Class* in 1899.

Nor is it less apposite that Arsène Dumont, child of an older and less feverish civilization, produced his theory of 'social capillarity' in the last decade of the century. Examining France, he found that wherever social advancement was possible, there fertility was low; in places where subsistence living survived, where opportunity was denied to the social climber, there was high fertility. If he had examined England, he would have found his theory amply confirmed. The opportunities for social distinction had been offered with astonishing rapidity. The ambitious man could see clearly that 'he travels the fastest who travels alone'. Without the encumbrance of an unproductive family, he could rise quicker. Although this may not have been the view of the majority of the adult population, yet these too realized that if neither they nor their children were to slip back down the social ladder, the family must be restricted. By experience and by Act of Parliament, it had been driven home that if children were to succeed in maintaining the social and economic level of their parents, they must be both mentally and materially equipped against the future. The fewer children there were, the better could the equipment be and the wider the opportunities open to them.

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Thus a number of influences were appearing almost simultaneously to prompt those newly married in the seventies, eighties and nineties to limit their families. From the point of view of the rich, the complexity of economic and social life had lowered the barriers of privilege and opened to the mob the places once strictly preserved, the Services, civil and military, the higher ranks of the Church, the seats in Parliament. Career was no longer open to influence alone; the talents had secured a share. At the same time, the new plutocracy was setting a standard of conspicuous consumption by the purchase and display of new amenities to life, which made it incumbent on the owners of wealth of older origins to follow. On the side of the poor, there was also a new standard of comfort. The real income of a man in work rose by some 40 per cent between 1880 and 1900.¹

But, at the same time — different in kind but similar in effect — there was a new sense of insecurity. The problem of the worker in the thirties and forties had been one of wages; that of the worker in the last three decades of the century was one of employment. The insecurity thus created (it is not a question of average employment; statistics record only the general, not the particular, and we do not know how unemployment shifted) was to continue and increase as real income rose during the next fifty years. Each income-group was thus perplexed by the problems which the inconspicuous arrival of the tertiary stage had brought with it. To all it meant

¹ A. L. BOWLEY, *Wages and Income since 1860* (1937), p. xiii; see also COLIN CLARK, *National Income and Outlay* (1937), p. 233.

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a great or small addition to the insecurity of existence.

These personal problems were further exaggerated by other deterrents to the large family. The growth of towns meant a higher density of population and a consequent stringency of health regulation. Higher rents, smaller space, and the relation of space to health, all enforced a belief in 'the small family' on a people easily led towards any emergency exit from personal difficulties, and thankful not to be required to consider further the social implications of their actions. This attitude was strengthened by the teachings of the moral leaders, who proclaimed that parents who could not support, had no right to produce, children,¹ teachings derived from the more rational and less superstitious philosophy which had been gaining ground since the fifties. There was in these half-digested ideas enough matter to point to the average sensual man the most reasonable solution of his difficulties. Unaware of the social implications, and in any case careless of posterity, the plain man saw nothing but the crowds round him. The growth of unemployment underlined the fact that England was over-populated. If he himself had more children than he could support without limiting himself in his expenditure, he was merely adding to the problem. He was therefore acting as a good citizen in limiting his family. And this was all the more palatable, since a constant stream of suggestion was now being levelled at him to purchase all the amenities the tertiary stage was putting at his disposal. Only by limitation of his family could he enjoy them.

¹ EDITH M. ELDERTON, *Report on the English Birthrate* (1914), p. 235.

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In 1871, 54 out of 55 registration counties showed a gross reproduction rate of above 2; in 1891, 27 counties had a rate above 2; in 1911, only 3. In 1931 only 22 counties had a gross reproduction rate higher than 1, or unity. In the eighties, Richard Jefferies recorded the remarks of an old countryman. 'He minded when that sharp old Miss —— was always coming round with blankets and tracts like taking some straw to a lot of pigs, and lecturing his missus about economy. What a fuss she made and scolded his wife as if she was a thief for having her fifteenth boy! His missus had turned on her at last and said, "Lor, miss! that's all the pleasure me and my old man got".'¹ In 1938, no sharp old tract-carrier reproves the countryman's wife. The age that fostered her and Jefferies's peasant passed with the Great Depression: and countryfolk have other pleasures. Before the end of the nineteenth century, the future decline of the population of this island was already observed. What followed was inevitable in a society which had ceased to function as a social body.

¹ *Toilers of the Field* (1892), pp. 187-8.

CHAPTER VIII

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THE twentieth century brought no qualitative changes in the trend which had begun some forty years earlier. It is only in the quantitative aspect that they may be observed. Great Britain had advanced well into the tertiary stage; the stage had widened if not deepened; more non-necessary goods were created, and greater pressure was put upon the consumer to purchase.¹ Further, invention had now taken a strong part in the advance. In the nineteenth century, invention certainly put a number of novelties of consumption into the hands of the public. There was the roller-skate (or volito), invented in the fifties, which caused a small boom in the seventies. There was the invention of lawn tennis also in the seventies. There was the bicycle. But it was not until the twentieth century that the inventor really took a hand. 'Contrary to the common impression, not all inventions save labour. Some merely develop new types of consumers' goods, such as the phonograph, the radio, and the development of rayon. Others save capital, such

¹ I wonder whether anyone has noticed the almost complete death of the words 'thrift' and 'thrifty' in popular speech during the past thirty years? They were the watchwords of education in the mid-nineteenth century. 'Thrift to-day has no place in our list of virtues. It is no longer a virtue to refrain from expenditure; and indeed we are encouraged to spend. It is inconceivable that a Victorian government would have ordered the plastering of the streets with the slogans: 'Spend for Employment' and 'Spend for Prosperity'.

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as multiplex telegraphy; while others, such as skyscrapers, save land. Mr. S. C. Gilfillan has taken the 120 inventions which are commonly agreed upon as being the most important of the last generation, and after discarding 11 as being too difficult to classify, has tentatively classified the remainder into four groups in the following proportions:

<i>Types of Inventions</i>	<i>Percentage of Inventions</i>
Labour saving	33
Capital saving	14
Land saving	8
Development of Consumers' Goods	45
	<hr/>
	100
	<hr/>

'It will be seen that 45 per cent or nearly one-half of all these inventions were in the field of consumers' goods.'¹

The drive in this direction, at least so far as Britain is concerned, only began in earnest after the War of 1914-1918. Although many of the goods which to-day are moderately common, for example, the motor car and gramophone,² were invented in the twenty-five years before the war of 1914, their use was confined largely to the most wealthy classes. This increase in the development of consumers' goods, and the consequent increased pressure on the consumer to purchase, went along with a continual sharpening of the feeling of insecurity. Between 1900 and 1914, for the main body of the population, real income did not expand. Prices rose, but though money wages rose too, they rose on the whole to a less degree.

¹ P. H. DOUGLAS, *Theory of Wages* (1934), p. 214.

² The inventions were in fact earlier, but their commercial distribution only began in the late nineties.

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There was a slow fall in real income, apparent only as each trade in turn was affected. Further, unemployment in at least half of the fourteen years rose to percentages as bad as any except the very worst years of the previous forty (it may indeed have been really worse, since national unemployment figures only became a duty of the central government in 1905). There were, of course, certain compensations in the field of the social services, free primary education (1891), health insurance¹ (1911), old age pensions (1908). Equally, there were other disadvantages such as the higher intensification of labour. In general, the economic forces at work to intensify the worker's sense of insecurity were unchanged.

On to this society there broke a war more severe than any hitherto experienced in its demands on labour and capital. Whether this war marked the end of a historical period is unimportant. It is important for the influence of its secondary effects in hastening a tendency which was already in evidence.

Certain branches of industry became, to all intents, conscript, but on terms which were still those of competitive industry; and these trades recruited their workers by the same methods as those employed in

¹ The cynic may, however, enjoy the following commentary: 'Mr. Lloyd George's new Act . . . was to do wonderful things. Every poor man was henceforth to have at his disposal all the medical and surgical science and skill that had hitherto been at the service only of the rich. There was to be a bottle of "real medicine" on every tenement mantelpiece . . . When the Insurance Act was introduced, the bottle of medicine was just about to settle down on its deathbed. The Act rejuvenated it, and to-day there can hardly be a working-class home in the land without a partly-consumed eight or ten ounce bottle of bitter or sweet, brown or pinkish mixture, composed of ingredients in the efficacy of which not one doctor in fifty has the slightest faith.' Dr. HARRY ROBERTS in the *New Statesman*, June 1st, 1935.

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peace-time, that is, by the offer of wages which fluctuated in a similar manner, if to a wider extent. Many received wages and salaries which, in terms of money, were higher than any they had ever dreamed. Young people were drafted into trades in which their monetary rewards reached a height only to be expected in peacetime after years of work. At the same time, prices for all the necessities of life rose to a no less extent, so that in terms of real wages, the position of the worker was inferior to that of any earlier time, if one assumes that he was purchasing in exactly the same way and to the same extent as before the war. The assumption would be false. Many articles of common consumption became either too expensive to buy or actually disappeared from the market altogether. Conversely, the prices of certain goods of luxury consumption either rose but slightly, or fell. Men and women found that, since they had to, they could get along on smaller quantities of some things hitherto deemed necessities, while once-despised substitutes were adopted either with joy or apologies. At the same time they were able to acquire non-necessary goods which had hitherto been beyond their purse. Thus, a further irritant was given to the already endemic itch to possess goods which distinguish the possessor from his neighbour.

These social effects were to be considerably enhanced by the various economic consequences which grew out of the war and more particularly out of the post-war readjustment. The war had badly dislocated the British export trade. While, on the one side, the European continent was in economic ruins, other markets had been

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entered by neutrals or quasi-neutrals, the Americans and the Japanese, and these markets were largely irrecoverable. This, in turn, meant that in addition to the burden of debt imposed by military operations, Britain was not in a position to assume her pre-war activity of exporting capital. It is true that efforts to do so were made by loans to rebuild the economic structure of Europe; but with defaults, re-sales, conversions, and repayments, the British holdings of capital abroad were no greater in the year 1934 than they had been in 1913,¹ although there had been a moderate export of capital between 1920 and 1929.²

In view of the position, it was natural that, as exports declined, industry and capital should look closer towards the development of the home, colonial and dominion markets. But under a system of free imports, countries with a lower standard of living could, through lower wage levels, compete and overpass the British manufacturer. Thus there was an incentive to greater mechanization.

The effects of this increased mechanization of industry were twofold. In the older industries, it led to an indefinable amount of technological unemployment, with the result that fewer young men were taken on.³

¹ The figures are estimated in £ million:

1895	1600	(C. K. HOBSON, <i>The Export of Capital</i>).
1913	3763	(HERBERT FEIS, <i>Europe, the World's Banker</i>).
1935	3437	(SIR ROBERT KINDERSLEY, <i>Economic Journal</i> , December, 1937).

² *Economist*, November 20th, 1937, p. 362.

³ See the analysis of Age Distribution in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, September, 1938. The industries of which the employees over 44 years of age form more than one-third of the personnel, are: Port-transport (46.5 per

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With fewer openings in the textile and heavy industries, the younger workers began to drift southwards to the new light industries which began to open up round London and other southern towns. This increased the housing difficulties, already severe owing to the stagnation of building during the war. The housing problem was further complicated by a new drift to the towns as agriculture, which had flourished between 1914 and 1919, once more declined. As a result there has been a considerable extension of Building Societies, whose business is not to rent but to sell houses. The 'Own your own house' movement has sprung up; however admirable this may be from an ethical point of view, it means to the purchaser a higher drain on income. And further it has the disadvantage of making labour less mobile.

An effect of mechanization, and one of greater consequence, has been that already noted (chap. v) of the displacement of the older skilled worker by the highly-skilled technician on the one side, and by almost wholly unskilled labour on the other.¹ The result of this is to some extent reflected in the distribution of incomes.

¹ In a glass-plant in Muncie, Indiana, 84 per cent of the tool-using employees, exclusive of foremen, require one month or less of training, another 4 per cent not more than 6 months, 6 per cent a year, and the remaining 6 per cent, of whom nearly half are carpenters and plumbers and thus not primarily factory workers, three years. R. S. and H. M. LYND, *Middletown* (1929), pp. 74-5.

cent), Pig Iron (blast furnaces) (38.5 per cent), Public Works Contracting (37.3 per cent), Shipbuilding and repairing (34.7 per cent), Fishing (34.4 per cent). On the other hand, in the age-group 14-24, the following show the highest percentages: Electric Cable, Apparatus, etc. (44.7 per cent), Distributive Trades (43.2 per cent), Commerce and Finance (44.3 per cent), Woodworking, etc. (41.5 per cent). These figures are for males. In the female section it is enough to compare the 63.6 per cent in the age-group 14-24 of the Electric Cable industry with the 49.7 per cent (age-group 25-44) and the 17.5 per cent (age-group 45-64) in the cotton industry.

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Whereas in 1911 the share of the national income distributed to wage-earners was 39.5 per cent, and that to the salariat 15.6 per cent, in 1935 the shares were respectively 40.5 per cent and 25 per cent.¹ The emergence of the salariat, which was only faintly visible before 1914, has by now become clear and well-defined. This new social class, which was emerging in the last decades of the nineteenth century, is developing into one which in due time may dominate society. The social implications, in many ways disturbing, of this dominance are of an importance too profound to be discussed briefly: they may be pondered.

Further, the loss of export markets after the war, the slump of 1930 onwards, and the prohibition on foreign lending, all turned the eyes of the investor towards the home market, much as he had turned them during the seventies and eighties. As the older and heavy industries declined, so concentration on the consumer at home became more marked. It is during the past twenty years that we have seen the development of the wireless, the cinema, the motor car and bicycle, the gramophone, artificial silk, patent medicines, the bathroom, central heating, the mechanical refrigerator, cosmetics, hair-dressing, photography, greyhound racing, the extension of betting to many erstwhile virginal forms of amusement, the development of foreign travel and the aeroplane. Many of these have been due to the inventor. The movement is reflected in the figures for employment.

Between 1928 and 1937, the number of insured workers

¹ COLIN CLARK, *National Income and Outlay* (1937), p. 94.

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has increased by 15.28 per cent. The following show the percentage changes in certain industries:

<i>Absolute increases</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Distribution	+27.7
Manufacture of toys and games	+51.8
Commerce and Finance	+21.5
Hotels, etc.	+41.0
Entertainment and Sport	+104.0
Laundries, Cleaning, etc.	+34.2
Building	+26.7
Motors, Aeroplanes, etc.	+50.6
Scientific and Photographic appliances	+53.9
Furniture and Upholstery	+29.8
National and Local Government	+35.6
<i>Relative increases and absolute decreases</i>	
Shipbuilding and Repairing	-14.6
Coal-mining	-22.1
Cotton	-26.2
Woollen and Worsted	-7.9
Artificial Silk	+14.8
Textiles generally	-17.7
All Metal Manufacturing	+4.5
Pig Iron (blast furnaces)	-21.9
Steel	+1.8
General Engineering	+5.4
Chemicals	+7.6
Musical instruments	-42.3
Food, drink, etc.	+14.0
Transport	+15.8

In this second group, some of the declines are due to lack of demand, some to mechanization, and some to both. The total physical output of coal for example (1924 = 100) sank from 93 to 86 between 1930 and 1935, but the amount raised per worker rose from 117 to 131.¹ The loss of export markets is reflected in the decline of

¹ 'Output, Employment and Wages in the U.K., 1924, 1930, 1935', by G. L. SCHWARTZ and E. C. RHODES, *R. Eco. Soc., Special Memo.*, No. 75, p. 3.

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employment in cotton and shipbuilding. The increase of mechanization is seen in the comparatively small increase in the number of workers employed in the rapidly-growing artificial silk industry. On the other side, one notes the immense increase in entertainment and sport (in figures, from 68,000 to nearly 140,000); in the manufacture of toys and games (11,000 to 17,000); in motors and aeroplanes (234,000 to 351,000), although some of this last increase must be credited to government action; and in the camera trade. Noticeable, too, is the small relative increase in transport compared with the absolute rise in the distributive trades.

At the same time may be noticed the increase of the so-called black-coated worker; between 1928 and 1937, commerce and finance absorbed nearly 50,000 more individuals. Moreover, the increases in the productive industries have frequently been in the administrative side, and not among the operatives. In his schedule,¹ Mr. G. L. Schwartz analyses the changes in personnel in various groups of industries which employ altogether more than seven million persons, in 1924, 1930 and 1935. These are the totals:

000s	1924	1930	1935
Operatives	6,665	6,418 = -3.7%	6,271 = -2.29%
Administrative	633	725 = +12.95%	805 = +11.03%
	<hr/> 7,298	<hr/> 7,143 = -2.1%	<hr/> 7,077 = -0.92%

It is also estimated that between 1930 and 1935 the increase in physical productivity of factory industry has

¹ SCHWARTZ and RHODES, loc. cit., p. 22.

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been not less than 20 per cent. Thus 'since the cost of living fell by $18\frac{1}{2}$ per cent while wages fell by only 5 per cent between 1924 and 1935, the wage-earners in these industries (i.e. those analysed by Mr. Schwartz) gained about half their increased efficiency in terms of their real earnings, while wage-earners in other occupations, and the rest of the community, probably gained in their standard of life appreciably more than was represented by any improvement in their own efficiency'.¹

There is here sufficient evidence to show that the group or class, which has gained most, has been the salariat, that is to say, the class which, while it is frequently less well paid than the wage-earning class, sets more store by social status. And moreover, this class is likely to increase as each industry becomes more mechanized.

Apart from these social consequences, the advance into the tertiary stage has economic effects which lead directly to economic instability. So long as production was designed merely to provide necessities, it was possible to foresee demands by the ordinary registration of the simple price system. The older economists were correct in stating it as the only reasonable method of conjecture. So much bread, so much meat, so much tea, so much coal and iron, were consumed in one year; and the figures gave a fairly reasonable basis of estimating for the following year. But as soon as the income necessary for the provision of the lowest needs was passed, the price system failed to act as a register on which the producer could base his future. In the primary or secondary economic

¹ J. M. KEYNES, in *The Times*, September 13th, 1938.

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stage the consumer is to a certain extent controlled by the requirements of his body. In the tertiary stage, he is at liberty, when he has provided for his absolute necessities, to spend the balance of his income how he will. He can buy a motor car in one year, a fur coat in the next, cigars in the next, books, gramophone records, water-colours, jam tarts or education. But his purchases in any one year do not show that he will continue expenditure in the same lines for the future. His demand is purely optional; and he is the creature of whim.

Thus it becomes increasingly difficult for the producer of consumption goods to forecast what is going to happen. He attempts to remedy this defect by trying to stabilize demand through advertising. Often, owing to the fact that his goods have been reduced in price to reach a large mass of consumers by mass production, which itself depends on the volume of consumption being maintained, the advertising campaigns have to cover a far wider extent than they would if the producer were merely offering some necessary article. The point has now been reached where the producers of goods in the tertiary stage are no longer fighting enemies in their own line of goods, but producers of alternative commodities. Hence the general advertising which has appeared in the last few years. 'Beer is Best' and 'Tea for the Droops'; 'Eat more Bread' against 'Eat more Potatoes'; 'An Apple a Day, etc.' facing 'Say it with Flowers'; 'Travel by Train' glaring at 'Invest in a Motor Car', and so forth. The enormous spread and increase in advertising, coupled with the great improvement in the technique of

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advertising since the last war (most advertising men will tell you that their art — or should it be science? — only started in 1920) has put a further constant pressure on the consumer to consume; but has failed, as it must, in its object, which is to narrow his expenditure to one line. Instead, it has stimulated him to purchase more, by attempting to demonstrate to him that all advertised goods are necessities.

In this, advertising has had one by no means feeble ally, the motion picture industry. It is impossible to offer evidence; but it is a not very daring speculation to suggest that the motion picture has, for the first time, shown people how others of a higher income group live, or are believed by film directors to live. The visual record is far more powerful than the written word, and the consumer who spends £40 million per annum in watching the films, is certainly being unconsciously inoculated with a desire to enjoy physically, as he does vicariously, the kind of life depicted on the screen. Otherwise, he would spend his £40 million elsewhere. The movie is helping to break down that sales resistance against which the advertisers' written word has battled with so much difficulty.

Further, the policy of selling goods on hire-purchase terms, which had begun in a small way in the eighties, was extended after 1919 and developed into the most effective weapon of the producer of non-necessary goods. From an economic point of view, commerce on such terms offers certain advantages. On the other hand, if economic ends are not the sole criterion, such

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commerce is open to grave criticism. 'It promotes extravagance, based on the chances of continuing and growing incomes. Competition has resulted in the extension of the system to articles which depreciate rapidly. It creates a body of debt that stands for something already consumed, at least in part. It tends to the over-extension of industry to meet an anticipatory demand, and thus encourages over-production. It is like monetary inflation, and produces a condition which requires for its maintenance more and larger doses of the stimulant. It encourages the production of luxuries against non-luxury goods.'¹

All this is dimly reflected in the figures of national expenditure worked out by Mr. A. E. Feavearyear and printed in two articles in the *Economic Journal*.² They cover the years 1924-27, and the year 1932. Between these dates, there intervened a considerable fall in prices (wholesale prices fell by some 30 per cent between 1928 and 1932) and also a fall in the nominal value of the national income.

The 1932 figures are particularly interesting because in this year the country was still suffering from the depression, which was only just beginning to lift, and the consumer was probably still buying cautiously, spending more of his income on what he deemed his necessities for the present and the future. Yet it is to be noticed that the proportion of the income spent on food has varied very little, only one-half per cent, although the consumer is

¹ W. F. CRICK, *The Economics of Instalment Trading* (1929), p. 125-26.

² March 1931 and March 1934.

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getting much more for his money. In the majority of articles, greater quantities were purchased. The exceptions were, first, bread, a basic necessity, which remained stable, and flour, which declined. Since he was eating more cakes and biscuits, it is probable that the average consumer was eating fewer puddings, a conjecture which is to some extent supported by the continuing increase in confectioners' shops.¹ The other exceptions were lard and margarine, for which, owing to the fall in its price, butter was substituted. Moreover, there was greater variety of purchase. But the interesting point brought out by the analysis is that the proportions spent on non-necessities, with the exception of liquor, have actually increased. In 1932, some 17½ per cent of the national expenditure went on liquor, tobacco, entertainments and sports, on newspapers and books, and on miscellaneous articles, jewellery, cosmetics, foreign travel, servants, photography, etc. In that year nearly £100 million were spent on the upkeep, running and depreciation of 1,100,000 cars. Since then the motor car industry has advanced. In 1937, the number of cars was calculated at 1,825,000,² which, on the basis of the 1932 figures, and making the appropriate allowance for the reduction of licence duty, works out at £159 million.

According to the *Economist*, there is strong evidence to suggest that ownership of motor cars has penetrated well below the £400 income level. In Great Britain there are approximately 2.3 million people with incomes of £250

¹ See P. FORD, 'Excessive Competition in the Retail Trades', *Eco. Journal*, September 1935, p. 507.

² *Economist*, October 16th, 1937, p. 100.

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a year and over; thus more than 75 per cent of people with incomes of over £5 a week are running motor cars and spending on an average £86 per annum on their upkeep. The luxuries of the last generation have become the decencies of the present, with a vengeance.

To sum up, England reached the tertiary stage without being aware of it and without any opportunity of acquiring the mental or spiritual discipline that might have enabled its possessors to grasp the social implications of their personal attitude towards the ever-growing opportunities for variety of purchase. The teaching in the schools was not devised to inculcate a critical and discriminating habit of mind into the majority of the population. Before 1914, 'to read it in the paper' was the equivalent of saying a thing was credible. The 'you can't believe a word you read', which a war-experienced generation adopted, is not so much a healthy scepticism as an unwilling admission that one has been had. It is the surprise of the print-fed mind at the fact that the printed word, paper and ink, can and do lie.

As a result, this uneducated public bought non-necessary goods on the principle of whim. The habit was accentuated by the emergence of an intermediate group, neither middle-class nor working-class, which, because it was at once ambitious to differentiate itself from those it believed its inferiors, and to emulate those it conceived its superiors, and because it was too naive to perceive that material possessions were not the insignia of a higher

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class, fell ready victims to the producer and the salesman.¹

It will be objected that this class forms but a small proportion of the community. On Professor Bowley's estimate, the middle classes formed 27.5 per cent of the occupied population in 1931.² Whether this is a high proportion or not is no matter. What is important is that, by the logic of what is called progress, this is the class that is bound to increase, as man gains a closer grip over his material environment. Where the economist interprets the rise in the standard of life by the statistics of consumption, the sociologist discovers the appearance of this phase of rising standards in the growth of this middle and lower middle class with its conventions and tabus. As the standard of life rises, so more families are recruited into this class. But since this is the class which is peculiarly susceptible to the claims of status, because it has only just emerged from the masses and feels its hold on what it has acquired to be precarious, it is the very class which feels it necessary to demarcate the boundary between itself and those of a lower status by an expenditure which it can ill sustain. To do this, it retrenches in the one way which

¹ I do not imply that this snobbishness is confined to this or any other class or country. The following quotation from MR. GEOFFREY GORER's *Hot Strip Tease* has its point. "The complete reversal of the practices of twenty years ago is very curious. In his extremely stimulating *Theory of a Leisured Class*, Veblen . . . divided the behaviour of leisured people into two categories: "conspicuous waste" and "conspicuous leisure". In the last two decades the American rich have almost deserted the first category for the second. Picture palaces of unimaginable luxury, Paris dresses copied in the big stores at low prices . . . have made really conspicuous waste difficult to achieve. So the rich have arranged their lives to give as much work as possible; the simplicity and relative inconvenience of their homes need a very great deal of looking after."

² *Wages Since 1860* (1937), pp. 128-9.

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will not interfere with the standard of social conduct it has set itself, namely, in children. c

This has been the appropriate remedy of every class in the past which had set itself a standard above that of its necessities. It has been operated by the upper classes for more than a century; by the upper middle classes for perhaps sixty years. In neither case was it of particular social consequence, because these two classes have never formed a big proportion of the population, and are renewed by the rise of individuals from below. But when the same social philosophy penetrates a large and growing section of the community, the whole social structure may be threatened with dissolution.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

THE population of England and Wales is still growing; but the growth is small. It is probable that the limit will be reached within the next five years, at a point slightly above $40\frac{1}{2}$ million. The present trends of fertility and mortality indicate that thereafter a decline will set in, slight at first, but increasing with each decade.

On p. 199 is set out a table which shows the figures of population and its age composition at various dates in the past, and the estimated figures in 1965 and 1990. The figures of 1881 and 1901 come from the Registrar-General's returns; those for 1935, 1965 and 1990 have been calculated by Dr. Enid Charles.¹ In the columns for the last two dates are alternative estimates made by Dr. Charles. The figures under A assume that the fertility and mortality rates continue to be the same as in 1933. Those in column B assume a decline in keeping with the observed trend between 1923 and 1933 of the gross reproduction rate. In her summing up, Dr. Charles concluded that the B figures 'represent a more reasonable forecast [than those under A] of the trend of population if no new special agencies intervene to check declining fertility'.

¹ 'The Effect of Present Trends in Fertility and Mortality upon the Future Population, etc.', *R. Eco. Soc., Special Memo.*, No. 55 (1935).

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

It will be observed that not only does the population fall, and in the generation after 1965 at an almost precipitate rate; but that the structure of the age-groups of the population has undergone considerable changes. Whereas in 1881, 36.4 per cent of the population was under 14 years of age, to-day that percentage has fallen to 23.2, and in 1965 will have reached, on the more conservative estimate (A), no more than 17.5. Further, while the elder half of the working population, those between 45 and 64, in 1881 was only 14.3 per cent, in 1965 the proportion of the same age-group will almost have doubled. Of the future the historian can see little not visible to others. It is however possible to observe what should logically follow the continuation of the trends, and to attempt to indicate certain general consequences should no social change take place.

If we consider the position in 1965 under estimate B, which gives the more rapid decline, it will be seen that the total population has fallen by some 11 per cent; that of the total, 74.1 per cent are in the active working age-groups; and that the children up to school-leaving age form only 10 per cent in this year, as opposed to 23.2 per cent of the larger population of 1935. It is clear from these figures that the character of economic demand will have undergone a considerable change.

This in itself would not be alarming, if the position were static, if it were known that the total population would not shrink further and that the age-groups would maintain their ratios. It would be possible — if no new social agencies intervened, so that there was no glissade

TOTAL POPULATION, ENGLAND AND WALES
(*'000s omitted*)

Age Group	1881	%	1901	%	1935	%	1965	%	1965	%	1990	%	1990	%
					(A)		(B)		(A)		(B)			
0-4	3,521	13.5	3,717	11.4	2,860	7.0	2,149	5.6	2.6	1,689	5.4	288	1.2	
5-14	5,948	22.9	6,829	21.0	6,572	16.2	4,601	11.9	7.4	3,535	11.2	792	3.4	
15-24	4,875	18.7	6,367	19.6	6,428	15.9	4,967	12.9	3.731	10.3	3,791	12.0	1,281	5.6
25-44	6,734	26.0	9,252	28.4	12,476	30.8	11,114	28.9	11,134	31.5	8,539	27.0	5,135	22.0
45-64	3,708	14.3	4,845	14.9	9,016	22.2	10,811	28.1	11,708	32.3	8,612	27.3	8,861	28.1
65-74	852	3.3	1,076	3.3	2,308	5.7	3,311	8.6	3,938	10.9	3,511	11.1	4,484	19.3
75 & over	336	1.3	442	1.4	908	2.2	1,549	4.0	1,771	5.0	1,885	6.0	2,417	10.4
	25,974		32,528		40,568		38,502		35,901		31,562		23,258	
Per cent change			+29%		+21.6%		-5.0%		-11.5%		-18.0%		-35.2%	
			(from 1881)...		+56.1%				(from 1935)...		-22.2%		-42.6%	

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after 1965 or thereabouts — to make adjustments to meet the situation. It has been said that with a slightly falling population, and with no decrease in the present level of saving, the capital per head should increase at a greater pace than in the past, and the standard of living should therefore rise. But this wide generalization is subject to many qualifications, so that the fairly immediate future is far less rosy than the generalization implies. Mr. J. M. Keynes in the Galton Lecture of 1937¹ explained the sources of capital as three; the growth of population, the average level of consumption, and capital technique. Of these the emphatic movers between 1860 and 1913 were the growth of population, which rose by about 50 per cent, and the rise of the standard of living by some 60 per cent, while technical changes played merely a minor part. Had the population remained stationary throughout the period, only about half the increased capital would have been necessary to produce the same rise in the standard of living. Turning then to the annual new investment, he hazarded that the cumulative increment to the capital stock is between 2 per cent and 4 per cent. Given the situation of a stable population, assuming that there was no redistribution of wealth which would affect the share of income saved, and no change in the rate of interest which would modify substantially capital technique, there would have to be discovered a demand for the annual cumulative increment of capital. Since nearly half the demand in the past

¹ 'The Economic Consequences of a Declining Population', *Eugenics Review*, XXIX, 1, pp. 13-17.

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has come from increasing population, in the event of population being stabilized we must find means of employing at least double the capital.¹ 'Now past experience shows that a greater cumulative increment than 1 per cent per annum in the standard of life has seldom proved practicable. Even if the fertility of invention would permit more, we cannot easily adjust ourselves to a greater rate of change than this involves.' 'It follows', he continued, 'that to ensure equilibrium conditions of prosperity over a period of years it will be essential, *either* that we alter our institutions and the distribution of wealth in a way which causes a smaller proportion of income to be saved, *or* that we reduce the rate of interest sufficiently to make profitable very large changes in the technique or in the direction of consumption which involve a much larger use of capital in proportion to output.'

Mr. Keynes's proposals are drastic, and involve at least something to which the name 'socialism' can be applied. The question whether they would be effective in raising the birth-rate will be dealt with in the next chapter. But it will be observed that in Mr. Keynes's view, the adjustment required in the present circumstances is not only formidable, but would rouse opposition.²

¹ In France, the birth-rate has recently fallen below the death-rate, and the population has begun to decline. An established consequence of this has been the increase in foreign lending. There seems no reason to suppose that with a declining consumers' market, capitalists in other countries will not imitate French capitalists at the appropriate moment. But in such a situation the openings for foreign investment will become fewer—they are already becoming so, although this is partly due to political action which can be reversed—so that we may reach the paradoxical position in which lenders are competing against each other for the favourable glances of borrowers. Panurge's maxim, 'to owe is a heroic virtue', may after all find warm supporters.

² 'There will be many social and political forces to oppose the necessary change.' Loc. cit.

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Further, if we look more closely at the age-groups, certain implications emerge. So far as the two lowest groups of 1965 are concerned, there will have been a decline in demand for all the things associated with childhood, milk, toys, cradles, prams, school books. Beyond this, there is the wholly imponderable item of education. Whether the present expenditure either in the aggregate or per capita will still be made, depends entirely on the public temper of the day through Parliament. Since there is little likelihood that the diminution in the school population will affect only some areas and leave the others untouched, it is unlikely that it will be possible to close schools. Each school will therefore have a smaller attendance. Equally it will be largely impossible to dispense with teachers by embracing two or more standards in the classes. The teaching staffs must remain no smaller and the schools no fewer than before — to the benefit of the pupils both in health and knowledge. On the other hand, in view of the shortage of adolescent labour, there might well be pressure put on the legislature for a lowering of the school-age. It is not past the imagination of a Brummagem back-bencher.

From the aspect of demand the position of the main body of the population in 1965 is perhaps less subject to change. The main body will be formed of those between 15 and 64 and contains nearly three-quarters of the people; but the aggregate will be no larger than that of the same age-groups in 1935. If reference is made to the table on p. 199, it will be seen that this group, the main body of consumers, has been ageing. Its tastes will have

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been shifting from those of youth to those of middle age, which may quite possibly mean a smaller demand for certain goods. On the other hand, its members will have fewer dependent children, and will thus be able to spend more on themselves.

There still remains the problem of the oldest age-groups, those of 65 and over, who represent nearly 16 per cent of the total, some five and a half million. It is possible that their numbers will have caused little change in demand, save for doctors and undertakers. Most of them, however, on account of the infirmities of age, will be unemployed, possibly dependants possessing very small means. Whereas a man is legally bound to support his children, he has no such responsibility for his elders. It is thus likely that there will be pressure from a large part of the electorate for increases and extensions of pensions, a pressure which it will be difficult for the Legislature to resist, more particularly since that pressure will be increased by relatives of the aged in the lower age groups who will desire to relieve themselves of responsibility. The way of the aged will be hard; but they will no doubt know how to defend themselves.

Beyond the problem of the demand of the age-groups, there will be the far more difficult problem of a society which is not expanding. There must be a decline in demand in all the trades which provide durable consumption goods. That is to say, the demand for houses, furniture and fittings, such as gas cookers, baths, refrigerators, wireless instruments, will decline rapidly. There will possibly be a stabilization of consumption of gas and

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electricity. The automobile trade, which may have expanded during part of this period, will begin to find that not only has expansion ceased, but that even the business of replacement is contracting. It may be conceded that the fall in demand might be delayed by the intervention of the inventors. For example, a really cheap popular car might tap a large hitherto latent demand (although this in turn would require a relaxation of insurance premiums, and a decrease in both car and petrol taxes). But this stimulus would be at best temporary. Saturation point would be reached fairly early and there would be no increasing population to take up the slack.

These changes in demand must sooner or later affect the supply side. The changes in consumption indicated above will cause a gradual decline in various directions. Taking, for example, the failure of expansion of demand for durable goods, we must expect to find that the industries associated with their production will suffer severe relapses; that manufacturers of cement, of tiles, of bricks, of pipes and of furniture, that firms engaged in electric wiring, heating and ventilating, in building, that motor car producers with all their satellites, that rubber manufacturers and builders of radio sets, will all feel the blast of a keen and icy wind. In these trades, which now employ something over two million workers, there will be unemployment, and not improbably unemployment of a severe character. To these must be added a number of those engaged in distribution or in providing the means of carrying on the trades; makers of tools and machinery and dealers in raw materials will be no less affected.

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Moreover, the unemployment will come earlier rather than late. Whereas there still may for some time be a demand for housing, and it will be possible to build more, it is little likely, with a future slump in house property under their eyes, that Building Societies will be prepared to finance the erection of new houses on a mortgage basis. Nor is it probable that the finance houses, which to-day assist the motor car trade to sell its products, will be able to view the future without misgivings.

It is, of course, allowed that in earlier periods trades and industries have decayed without causing a catastrophe external to themselves. But in every case, these eliminations have occurred in an expanding economy; the decline in these industries was not due to the contraction of the market for the goods they produced; but to the substitution of their produce by a more effective, cheaper or better article. The younger generation sought the new trades, and it was possible to absorb from the decaying industries such workers as were willing to be absorbed. Even the elimination of 250,000 handloom-weavers in a space of thirty years, which is the most violent example in the whole of English history, was, in the scale of time and size, a minor matter compared with what may be foreseen in the near future.

Somewhere it has been said that the creation of absolute zero would cause a vacuum into which the universe would, piece by piece, rapidly drop and disintegrate. In the same way unemployment in the industrial world might create a vacuum. This dismissal of perhaps two million workers over a very short period — for, once the

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peak of population is passed, unemployment in trades providing durable consumption goods will not be slow to supervene — will create a similar vacuum, and perhaps a similar disintegration. Of course, not all this number would be simultaneously dismissed; but though the process would be gradual, it would be continuous and cumulative and comparatively rapid. Moreover, in every year a proportion of employees are going out for various personal reasons. These would not be replaced; the vacancies caused by their disappearance would not be filled. This may to some extent be balanced by the smaller numbers coming forward from the lower age-groups for employment, and may be a slight palliative of the situation, although in reality it is merely a further symptom of the decline and a hastening of the process. Adolescent unemployment may indeed be no smaller in proportion than it is now.¹ For adolescents are in the main absorbed by the new or rising industries. But will there be these industries in the situation of decline? New industries, as a rule, mean the employment of a disproportionate amount of capital; but with all markets sinking, it is difficult to imagine capital being offered from the annual cumulative increment. Nor again does one see on any large scale the revival of now obsolete industries, since these depended on the presence of a force of skilled workmen, who have now disappeared.

The idea that a smaller population will permit the re-absorption of those at present unemployed is therefore a

¹ This is not, as it might appear, in contradiction to the suggestion on p. 202. There may still be a demand for juvenile employees, who will be dismissed, as they are to-day, when they get older, and thus swell the ranks of the unemployed.

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vulgar error. If anything, unemployment is likely to grow, for the influence exerted by the decline of any one group of important domestic industries will in their turn affect in a greater or lesser degree most of the others.

Similarly, before any numerical decline in the population takes place, complications will begin to make themselves felt in the financial structure. With the ageing population, the death rate will rise above the birth-rate. Even before industry is affected, this must touch the insurance companies, who to an increasing degree will be called on to pay out, while their receipts from new business must steadily decline. Since the insurance companies are among the heaviest investors in British funds, the liquidation of their assets will exert, with an ever increasing effect, serious pressure on the capital value of investment.

Finally, beyond these threatening circumstances, there will arise complexities in the matter of national finance. A group of economists who have worked on the problem¹ (their article may be commended to all those who regard the menace of depopulation as a political ramp) bluntly state that in 1970 'we cannot hope to maintain a balanced budget with our present burden of taxes and that there is no margin for substantial remissions'. Their most optimistic reasonable forecast puts the expenditure at no lower than £1000 million (for the year 1938-39 it is £1035 million) with an absolute limit of taxable capacity at £1180 million. Even these optimistic figures are reached only on four assumptions, of some of which the

¹ *Economist*, June 11th, 1938.

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fulfilment would seem almost impossible. The first is that productivity continues to increase at the Victorian rate; this is by no means impossible. Secondly that the total expenditure of the Supply Services can be kept down to the figure of 1938. The outbreak of war puts this assumption out of court. The third is that there is no increase in the debt burdens. Again in view of the present situation, this requirement cannot be fulfilled. Lastly, that there must be a favourable balance of prosperous years against depressed years. The final condition is the most formidable, for a severe depression will increase the necessity of government expenditure both on unemployment pay and on relief works, and will undoubtedly swell the National Debt. The prospects of the fulfilment of this last condition would appear to be dubious in view of the effects of a waning demand on the durable consumption goods industries and their subsidiaries. 'Within a generation, it appears likely that even in the most favourable conditions, we shall be faced with the very difficult problem of meeting a steadily rising expenditure out of a not merely static revenue but a static taxable capacity.'

Both Mr. Keynes and this group of experts have forecast certain broad consequences as a result of the stabilizing of the population and have laid down certain adjustments which will have to be made in the near future if these consequences are to be averted. 'We shall', says Mr. Keynes, 'be absolutely dependent for the maintenance of prosperity and civil peace on the policies of increasing consumption by a more equal distribution of incomes and of forcing down the rate of interest so as to

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make profitable a substantial change in the period of production. If we do not, of set and determined purpose, pursue these policies, then without question we shall be cheated of the benefits we stand to gain . . . and shall suffer from . . . perhaps more intolerable depredations.'

Much the same conclusion is reached by the group of economists. They offer three ways of escape. First, reduction of State expenditure over the whole field, both of civil and defence expenditure, a task they admit to be politically, as well as from past experience, actively difficult. Secondly, they advocate raising a larger share of the national income through taxation, the possibilities of which they confess to be limited. And thirdly, as Mr. Keynes does, they demand an acceleration in the rate of increase of production. 'It might be salutary', they write, 'if it were more generally recognized that the greatest possible production of goods and services is, in general, more necessary to-day than ever if social progress is to be maintained.' And they conclude gloomily: 'We are bound to admit the possibility that a time may come when some people will begin to consider that the only practicable method to increase the national income, and at the same time to divert a substantially large proportion of it into the coffers of the State, is the method of the totalitarian States.'

It will be observed that these analysts have confined their criticisms to the period when the population is stable or is falling slowly, that is, roughly, the period of the next thirty years. As to what will follow in the next generation, they are, perhaps mercifully, silent. They

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have merely offered a method of bridging a critical time, from which they apparently expect the country to emerge. This safe emergence, however, is not borne out by the pre-indication made by Dr. Charles and her associates. Instead of emerging at the end of thirty years or so with a population only slightly reduced, the community, if no social change has come about, will be in a far more serious situation. If no change intervenes, the decline of the earlier years will become increasingly rapid and the solutions offered for the earlier period by the economists become inapplicable. The problem will have passed the stage at which these or any other palliatives directed to maintaining the standard of life are practicable. A glance at the age-groups will convince the reader that the situation will defy solution. Falls of population in the nature of 18 per cent within the span of thirty years, or even as much as 35 per cent, cannot be coped with. If no change takes place within the next decade, or even less, nothing can be expected save a rapid disintegration of a society in the midst of its largely unused and unusable capital stock. Of what value will it be to possess machines which can only be run economically for an expanding market? Of what value to possess houses capable of sheltering a population of forty million, when each year sees that population falling towards half its number? Of what value to have railway systems which require no fewer workmen to run, for a transportation demand of 60 per cent? To attempt to sketch the disintegration and dissolution of the structure of such a society baffles all reasonable conjecture. It is sufficient

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to suggest that the psychological effect of such a decline will be infinitely depressing and that there will be little inclination to rally. The only remedy against such a collapse appears to lie in a resolute intention on the part of the community to maintain its numbers at a stable level.

CHAPTER X

THE DILEMMA

THE forecasts of the economists quoted in the previous chapter have the validity which may be accorded to serious, that is to disinterested, investigation. It follows that the most urgent problem of society is the maintenance of the population at a level which will permit it to enjoy a standard of life no less than that it enjoys at present, and if possible to raise that standard to a higher level. Whether the population at the moment is an 'optimum' or not, it is impossible to say dogmatically. 'An "optimum" population is that which produces maximum economic welfare.'¹ But the optimum depends on a number of circumstances other than the actual numbers of people: the existing standard of life, the expected standard, the means of procuring these levels, both from internal and external resources, the country's economic relationships with other countries, the possession of colonies to furnish raw materials, the advance of invention and of economic technique, etc. Many of these circumstances are transitory and imponderable. Since all these factors are liable to alteration either slowly or rapidly, no estimate of an optimum population can be either definite or permanent. It would appear that certain areas of Great Britain are seriously over-populated.

¹ A. M. CARR-SAUNDERS, *World Population* (1936), p. 330.

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The recent prediction of a water-shortage in London in the comparatively near future indicates at least one grave problem awaiting early solution, while the existence of distressed areas, some thickly, some thinly peopled, points to the conclusion that in these districts at least there is not an optimum population. It is thus delusive to suggest any figure either in the present or the future.

Yet whatever figure may be most desirable according to the circumstances, it is at least certain that any rapid change (such as the sociologists predict) will be calamitous because it will afford no leisure in which to consider the necessary adjustments. Each year a decline which is already before our eyes becomes increasingly difficult to arrest. The immediate question is to consider what policies and actions are appropriate in the circumstances to check the movement.

So far economists have gone no farther than to indicate briefly questions which will require solution in the next twenty-five to thirty years; but their dicta imply that, when the decline becomes more precipitous, the problems will defy the wit of man to unravel. Their hopes for the future appear to rest rather on a change in the popular attitude to children than on their own or the politicians' capacity to adjust policy to a further decline.

In the past both England and Scotland have received replenishments from various European countries. Irish, Flemings, Huguenots, Salzburg Protestants (that refugee problem of the eighteenth century!) and other exiles have found a shelter on this island, have grafted themselves on to and become part of the stock. There is no doubt that

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during the past decade we could have received a steady stream of European nationals in search of security, peasants and skilled workers, from almost every country from the Rhine to the Urals; and that no doubt to-day many would willingly embrace British or Imperial nationality. It is, however, improbable that this stream will be available at the moment in the future when it is required. Every country in north-west Europe is to-day faced by the same population problem as ourselves. Every country in Europe has to-day a lower birth-rate than it had thirty years ago. Of the countries of north-western and northern Europe, only Holland, Poland, Lithuania and the Irish Free State have a net reproduction rate at which dying population is replaced.¹ So that although in all² countries the population is still increasing, in approximately the same period as that in which we shall have to face the crisis, so too will they. Even so, were a multitude of desirable immigrants ready and willing, it is doubtful if, even with a falling population, the entrance of adults is desirable. The immigration of adults does no more than increase the population temporarily; and it adds to the higher age-groups of which we already have so great a sufficiency that we can maintain an unemployed body of more than a million. An inflow of adults will do no more than complicate existing problems without solving the problem of the future. The requirement is rather a draft of adolescents and children, at least in equal proportions between the sexes, but

¹ *Political Arithmetic*, p. 66.

² Except France, where a decline in the population has just begun.

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preferably with a preponderance of females. For this reason, even were sufficient fully adult immigrants available, they are by no means wholly desirable. The problem thus comes back to ourselves to solve.

For these purposes, let us assume that it is desirable to maintain the population of England and Wales at approximately its present round figure of 40 million.¹ To maintain this level, it is necessary that the net reproduction rate, which has been calculated by Dr. Enid Charles at 0.734,² should be raised to unity (1); or in more concrete terms, that approximately an average of 2.75 births *per married woman* is necessary.³

It would be impudent for me to attempt the discussion of the matter in its medical and biological aspects. That may be left to the professional experts. So far as I understand these things, there appears to be no medical or biological impediment in the main to the raising of the net reproduction rate to unity. The real impediment is a social attitude; and it is to the discussion of this social attitude, which manifests itself in a reluctance to produce children, that the following pages are directed.

There are in society three groups who have consciously or half-consciously restricted the family from different motives. The first is composed of those who have a regard for their already born or unborn children, those who feel that the political state of the world or society is so precarious that to produce a child is a crime against

¹ The gross reproduction rate of Scotland is higher, but still below replacement rate.

² *Political Arithmetic*, p. 65.

³ L. HOGGEN, in *What is Ahead of Us?* (1937), p. 173 f.n.

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the child. In a world living under the threat and in the darkness of war, they adopt the policy of the peasant of A.D. 999 and tremulously await the Day of Judgment.

A second group are less swayed by immediate menaces than by economic motives. Its members realize, possibly after they have had one or two children, that, owing to their economic position, they are unable to support any addition during the period of their children's dependence, or that by producing a second or third child they will hamper the chances of those already in existence. With these may be classed those who are faced by the fact that their economic position depends on an external appearance of easy circumstances — I do not suppose any bank would welcome the arrival of its clerks in boiler-suits. Both these groups can only view with misgiving the long years they must support dependent children, and the difficulty of finding employment for them at the end of their education. They know that by adding one more mouth to the family, they may be jeopardizing the future of those already living. They see that with a further burden both they and their children will sink in the economic and social scale. This type of reasoning is by no means confined to the lowest income groups; it is in fact far more prevalent among the higher. The richer income groups provide their children with more elaborate and expensive educations, in the hope of equipping them for walks of life no meaner than their own; they look forward to see them marrying into circles no poorer than theirs. Behind all these people lies the shadow of insecurity; while before some burns the light of ambition.

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'If the ideal of every Frenchman is to be a public servant, the ideal of every public servant is promotion. Now, promotion almost invariably necessitates changing one's place of residence. The unmarried or childless man has advantages in removal which are denied to the man burdened with a family . . . Here, as on all the paths of ambition, to climb high and rapidly one must not be loaded with luggage. The family, children, especially numerous children, are encumbrances, which the ambitious must forfeit; and they do. . . .'¹ Translate this passage into modern English life, in which almost every third member of the salariat considers himself more or less a *fonctionnaire*,² and some idea of the numbers involved can be conjectured. Thus both ambition and insecurity play their parts in the limitation of the family. One need add nothing to the comment of the Population Investigation Committee. 'These deterrents', they say, 'appear to be gaining in prevalence and importance.'³

Beyond this group, the size of which there is no means of assessing, there is a third, possibly the most important, those whose standard of life and comfort is such that they have nothing available for children without sacrifice. 'On a medium-sized income, a large family is incom-

¹ ARSÈNE DUMONT, *Dépopulation et Civilisation* (1890), p. 223. He continues: 'The wife of a public official must pay visits and attend functions, go to the ball at the Préfecture, where there is sometimes a shortage of women . . . If she remains cloistered in her home, absorbed in the care of her children, every one will habitually think of her husband as a man without a future, and from the moment that is thought, he will indeed have none.'

² Each industry as it comes boldly and cavalierly to demand from the government a subsidy arrogantly assumes the epithet of 'vital'. '*Messieurs, quand des intérêts atteignent à l'ampleur des nôtres, il se confondent avec l'intérêt national.*' So the Comité des Forges, and so in England sugar-beet, tramp-shipping, agriculture, broadcasting, railways and a dozen more.

³ *The Future of our Population*, p. 19.

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patible with minor luxuries and amenities, such as a motor, domestic help, travel, amusements and the entertainment of friends. And with a small income — that is with the income 75 per cent of the community receives — the raising of even one or two children brings down the family to a mere subsistence level.’¹ Money is not only the sinews and muscle of the advance of persons in that group; it is also the insignia of their social position and success. The boundary between pride and vanity is imperfectly delimited; the desire for the possession of a television set may lie on either side of that imperceptible frontier.

It is clearly impossible to estimate even widely the proportion of people affected by any one of the three main motives. It is, however, very probable that it is only an infinitesimal fraction which is consciously affected by any thought of the political situation, by the fear of war. A people which clearly knows that it is living in the shadow of war may perhaps think about it, and be prepared. One has only to compare the calm behaviour of the citizens of Prague in September 1938, testified to by all observers, with the panic displayed by the citizens of London at that time, to conclude that the average English man and woman had never thought about war in any realistic way.² Much less then would he or she have considered the possibilities in relation to the birth of children.

The second and third groups are considerably intermixed, and it is possible that, according to the standard of

¹ *The Future of our Population*, p. 20.

² In the year following September, 1938, Englishmen, too, accustomed themselves to the idea that war was possible, and likely. There was no panic in August and September, 1939.

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life, both the motive of solicitude for existing children and the motive of the standard of expenditure conventionally supposed proper to one's station in life, take shares of more or less equality.

It is thus both a selfish and unselfish complex which requires breaking down. The exorcizing of anything so impalpable as a social attitude is the biggest problem any government can face. And since governments largely maintain themselves by playing on social complexes at the moment and in the manner appropriate to their own purposes, social complexes are the last things with which governments like to tamper.

What policy then can usefully be suggested? Many remedies have been put forward. It has been thought that the facilities for the purchase of preventatives, which have increased in the last two decades, are responsible for the present situation. And in some countries the sale of the means of prevention and abortion, as well as abortion itself, have been made subject to legal proceedings. The projectors of similar laws for this country might have learned from a brief study of the past that this policy is delusive. The birth-rate was falling in England and Wales long before safe and easy methods of control were widely known. Dr. Edith Elderton, who was doing field work in the north at the turn of the century, spoke of methods of abortifaction which owed nothing to the ingenuity of the doctors and chemists, but which were the traditional recipes of old wives passed on from mouth to mouth.¹ The factory was the complete news-centre.

¹ EDITH M. ELDERTON, *Rep. on the English Birth-rate* (1914), p. 236.

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Knowledge and care will prevent conception; and so far as experience goes, laws against the restriction of the family by mechanical methods have always failed. 'No legislation of this kind will suffice to control a population in which restriction [of the family] has become a habit.'¹

Other writers have suggested that the cause of restriction is purely economic, and that high wages will induce married couples to breed. It is here convenient to look once more at Mr. Keynes's solution as an economist. He added in his peroration: 'If capitalist society rejects a more equal distribution of income, and the forces of banking and finance succeed in maintaining the rate of interest somewhere near the figure which ruled on the average during the nineteenth century (which was, by the way, a little *lower* than the rate of interest which rules to-day), then a chronic tendency towards the under-employment of resources must in the end sap and destroy that form of society.'² Mr. Keynes gave his solution from the point of view of the economist, and with it from that point of view there can be no quarrel. But it ignores the fact that our experience shows us that a raising of the standard of life has hitherto gone *pari passu* with the fall of the birth-rate. Mr. Keynes proposes to raise the standard, and, as I gather from his lecture, to a higher degree than yet known. Will it be followed by a further decline? Here lies the dilemma.

'We see', wrote Dr. Elderton,³ 'that in almost every case a bad social condition is associated with a large

¹ ELDERTON, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

² *Eugenics Review*, *loc. cit.*, p. 17.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

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family.' Dr. Elderton's opinion, published in 1914, was confirmed in 1938 by the University of Bristol Social Survey.¹ Of the sample 4500 families selected, 57.6 per cent had no children, and of this group 8 per cent were below a bare minimum standard of life, while 3.6 per cent had four or more children, and 52 per cent of this group were below the minimum standard of life. Moreover, while in the past it was the wealthy who limited their families, it has been observed that during the last thirty years the disparity in this matter between the high and low income groups is rapidly narrowing. All save the poorest classes of the community in this island to-day limit the family. And it is clear, if we look at the three types of motive set out above, that neither the first nor the third class would be affected by any increase in their income level; while it is more than possible that, in the second class, additional income would be spent rather to the benefit of existing children than to bring others into being. Moreover, with the increase of income, will not further targets be offered to the manufacturers and sellers of tertiary goods and services? Will not the beneficiaries of the higher standard be subjected to an even intenser barrage of suggestion to buy? It is more than likely. It must thus be presumed that in the restriction of birth, the finally effective impulse is the nature of people's wants and desires more than the amount of money they have to dispose of in the year.

Beyond the crude suggestion of higher wages, there is

¹ *The Times*, July 2nd, 1938, Letter from Prof. W. Hamilton Whyte. The preliminary report (*The Standard of Living in Bristol*, by Herbert Tout, 1938) has since been published with these facts more fully set out.

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the idea that the State shall in some way or other assume the responsibility for the children. The policy of family allowances has been practised for a number of years in some countries, either through the public funds, or by private enterprise. In some places family allowances are made to State employees; in others, private firms have taken the charge. In England, it has recently been adopted by a few institutions and industrial concerns. The policy has found an earnest advocate in the Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery.¹ 'Five shillings a week on an average would be sufficient, I believe, to secure decent and healthy conditions of life and nutrition for the children. I would not pay in respect of the first child; and, if finance was an insuperable difficulty, not until after the second child . . . The kind of scale I should like to see adopted is 4 shillings for the second child, 5 shillings for the third and fourth, and 6 shillings for subsequent children.' The money, he thinks, should be provided by equal contributions from the State, the employer and the worker. On the face of it, Mr. Amery's scheme is good, quite apart from whether it will succeed in raising the birth-rate; no one can impugn his claim that it is due 'in justice to the growing children of the existing generation'. Whether, however, it is likely to raise the birth-rate to the desired figure is open to doubt (not that Mr. Amery claims it would; he admits that such a policy would be no more than experimental). But the experience of France, where family allowances have been in operation in certain districts and industries over a number of years, leads to the belief that

¹ In *The Times*, June 25th, 1938.

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the effects have been very small.¹ The French, it is true, have succeeded by this method in lowering the rate of infantile mortality, a success which any society would welcome. But the claim to have made a substantial increase in the birth-rate is open to many objections, and British investigators are inclined to think that even in the departments giving the most generous allowances, the true increase has been slight.² The figures here, however, do justify to some extent a claim that the decline has been checked. In other countries, either the amount of the allowance appears to have been too small to weigh against the prevailing attitude towards large families, or, even where as generous as Mr. Amery's suggestion, as in Australia, the policy has been ineffective.

Further, it must be asked, towards which income groups are these allowances to be directed? Certainly towards the lowest, that is towards those who to-day proliferate most freely. They are not directed towards the higher income groups, who show the greatest reluctance to produce children. Clearly, even the best family allowance devised will not persuade either the first or the third of the three groups. The first is not open to economic influences; the third will not be tempted by any but considerably higher amounts than those envisaged.

Thus it would appear on the existing evidence that although family allowances may in time, by alleviating the economic burdens of parents, remove the anxiety

¹ D. V. GLASS, *The Struggle for Population* (1936), Chap. v.

² GLASS, loc. cit.

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with which many survey an addition to their family, it is by no means certain; and that the real obstacle is social complex, amounting almost to a psychosis. The task of breaking down this psychosis is not one merely of propaganda, for propaganda is unavailing unless those whom it is desired to convert are in a condition to receive and digest the message. Where the audience is not prepared, it will merely develop resistance.

There is, however, one country where a steadily and rapidly declining birth-rate has been turned into an increasing one to an almost spectacular degree. That country is Germany, and it is fortunate that it is so, since Germany bears a closer resemblance to England than any other European country. It is idle to look at France, Italy and Spain, where the basic economy is so wholly different from our own, where there are many to us quite alien influences at work, and where none of the policies in use has been effective. Germany, on the other hand, has been in much the same position as ourselves; further, her industrial society is not very different from that in Great Britain; and again, as in England, the increase in her population was rapid and the succeeding decline of her birth-rate no less spectacular, both phenomena offering clear comparisons with those of English history.

Germany has succeeded in raising her birth-rate from some 15 per 1000 in 1932 to about 19 per 1000 in 1936 (it fell a little in 1937); but she has not fully solved her problem, since her net reproduction rate in 1936 was still below unity — the increase was from 0.7 to 0.9.¹ But at

¹ *Political Arithmetic*, p. 69.

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least she has succeeded in making the decline of population less precipitous, and thus admitted opportunities for adjustment.

The reasons given for this up-swing in the birth-rate are various. Partly it has been due to the policy of financing marriages and births among the poor. The earliest policy was that of marriage-loans, adopted in 1933, the capital sum of which was repayable to the State at the rate of 1 per cent per month, but 25 per cent of the loan was cancelled at the birth of each child. Following on this, grants were made to families in poor circumstances, with not fewer than four children, on the birth of a further child. Since 1936, other forms of family allowance have been made in the case of families with three and more children. In addition, various measures have been adopted to prevent an influx of countrymen into the towns.

The spectacular rise, however, has not been solely due to these financial policies. Of the total marriages since 1933, in no year has the marriage allowance been accepted by more than a third of the couples. Dr. Burgdörfer, the vital statistician of the German Statistical Office, has shown that of the births at least two-thirds must be attributed to other factors than the allowance policy. What are these factors?

Naturally, a number of German writers ascribe the change to those mystical and unanalysable factors which the Germans invariably appear to consider most worth stressing. Since only a German can appreciate them, it is better to leave them on one side, and turn to the

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economic policies which have affected social life. In view of our previous analysis, it might be asked whether the famous policy of 'guns for butter' has anything to do with it. In Chapter IX it was suggested that, in the tertiary stage, instability of the economic system was aggravated by a freedom of choice on the part of the consumer undisciplined by any standards of taste or education and led by mere whim at the direction of the most forceful advertiser. It is a well known fact that, in Germany to-day, consumers' freedom of choice is severely limited by the over-riding demands of the State, that capital goods have increased at the expense of consumers' goods, and that in the hyperbolic phrase, guns have taken the place of butter. In other words, the German State has forcibly narrowed the tertiary stage. It is frequently stated by publicists that in consequence the German population has a lower standard of living to-day than that before the *Umschwung* of 1933. It may be conceded that the advance in real wages since that date has not been in any way equivalent to that of the English worker, that hours have increased (from 7.27 in 1933 to 7.71 in March 1937), and that there has been a serious deterioration in the quality of certain goods, particularly of textiles. On the other hand, and this is the important point, the rationing of vital goods and the stabilization of prices has meant a more even distribution of what consumption goods there are available. The only point where there is at all comparative freedom of consumption has been in the 'leisure' industry, by the means of paid holidays, cheap*travel facilities and cheap means of amusement, which did not

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require direct rationing. The question then arises whether this enforced asceticism is in any way responsible for the increase in births.

The question is put because an affirmative would appear to be a satisfactory complement to the theory that ability to purchase non-necessary goods is one of the basic causes of the decline in the birth-rate, and also because it appears to be held in some quarters, for example, by a reviewer in *The Times*, that the standard of life of the English middle-classes is 'too high', and that family limitation is due to 'laziness and false values'.¹ In other words, would a policy of forcibly restricting consumption cause a rise in the birth-rate? The theory at first sight is persuasive. People, in consequence of constricted consumption, will have more money, and will turn from the unobtainable motor cars, mink, *maquillage* or movies to breeding and educating large families. But on reflection, the theory's sole merit is simplicity. A number of alternative and less welcome consequences spring to the mind. Not only would such a scheme be a poor imitation of that of the German government; in other words, a development of capital goods at the expense of consumption goods for the purpose of unproductive materials (armaments): but also it would mean the dislocation of a large part of industry. Imagine the influences in peace-time which would be brought

¹ Cf. Literary Supplement, November 5th, 1938, p. 710, c. Why the middle classes should be singled out as the victims of this sumptuary criticism is not stated. The upper classes do not appear to proliferate so augustly. The ladies and gentlemen whose useless lives are so be-photographed in the illustrated papers do not really spend their time in breeding for posterity. However, it all depends what you mean by 'false values'.

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into action by the interests affected, their more than usually shrill clamour. Moreover, it is impracticable considering our commercial and financial relations with the Dominions.¹ No government could attempt so radical a purge and expect to survive; and, like old people, governments are very timid about their health.

The true answer, it may be suggested, lies further back. It was not the original intention of the German government to restrict consumption. That has only arisen as a result of their main policy, which was to get rid of unemployment. In this policy it has been eminently successful, possibly at the price of undermining the stamina of the nation. An employment figure of 13.3 million in June 1933, with 4.85 million out of work stood in 1938 at over 20 million with only 145,000 unemployed, and foreign labour was being imported to make good a shortage. Women who in 1933 were dismissed from industry to assist employment and also to become mothers, have to some extent been re-introduced into industry to make good the deficiency. (It will be interesting to observe whether the re-introduction affects the birth-rate.) As a result of the elimination of unemployment, the vast majority of the population has *a sense of security*, which could not have existed in the days of five million unemployed. This sense of security is such as is not offered by the family allowance system in other countries. It is a security, at least on the face of it, of employment not only for the parents but also for the children. In contrast, the allowance system by itself offers no security; the

¹ See p. 230.

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allowance ceases as soon as the child is of an age to support itself; it holds out no guarantee of employment; consequently the sense of security is absent. So long as the German government continues to see to it that parents of families of three or more are not harassed by fears of unemployment for themselves or for their children, other things being equal, there is no reason to suppose that, as long as the stock lasts, a new decline will set in.¹

'Other things being equal' qualified the last sentence; for there is always the question how long a regime can hold a society down to minimum enjoyment of goods. 'If the individual consumer's desires should re-emerge as the main determinant of production, the problem of adjustment will pose identical problems in Germany as elsewhere. Risk will once more dominate business activity, and it is difficult to see why the problem of stabilizing effective demand should differ in this system from the identical problem in free systems, except, perhaps, that the complications arising from fluctuations abroad and from the possibility of disinvesting by exporting capital can even then be prevented. But the *specific* advantages of the German system seem to diminish, once its aim is changed from war preparation to the provision of an increased standard of life.'² Since at present the German government's policy shows no indication of a

¹ DR. ENID CHARLES (*Political Arithmetic*, p. 69) prints a quotation from an article by Dr. Burgdörfer, in which he pointed out that after 1936 there would be a decline in the numbers of young people of marriageable age, owing to the entry of the war generations which are very small.

² T. BALOGH, 'The National Economy of Germany', in *E.J.*, September, 1938, p. 494.

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change of aim, it is unprofitable to speculate further on this theme.

The question whether it would be possible for Great Britain to adopt similar policies to Germany with the set purpose of eliminating unemployment and possibly of raising the birth-rate, is, however, worth closer examination. So long as England is connected with the Dominions and the Crown Colonies by economic and political ties, such policies would be impossible. For the German policy arises out of the fact that, owing to the lack of foreign exchange, Germany was unable to purchase the raw materials that industry required, and was thus forced to adopt exchange regulations and to prevent the export of capital. In conjunction with the means taken to solve the unemployment problem, this led to a rigid economic system, in which non-productive industry (armaments) became the dominant factor. The tertiary stage was thus checked. Inside the British Empire it is impossible to regulate exchange, unless there is a universal currency controlled by a central institution; a not impossible system in itself, but one which every political interest must oppose. Thus a British government could not be in a similar position to the German government of 1933. Moreover, apart from the political aspect, it must be remembered that the Dominions and Colonies supply an enormous proportion of England's consumption goods, or their raw materials. An attempt in time of peace to restrict consumption in England would produce repercussions which could only end in disaster to the political and economic structure of the Empire itself.

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Further, it may be asked whether the forcible reduction, *à l'allemande*, of the standard of life is desirable. It is easy to introduce sumptuary legislation directed against what are believed to be corrupting influences. Apart from the fact that such sumptuary legislation has almost invariably failed in its object, the German version is unconsciously directed against *all*, or nearly all, tertiary consumption. It condemns the population to a war or famine standard of existence for all time. This appears a negation of all desirable ends to human life. It is not a high standard of living which is wrong with the middle classes. The end of all economic activity is to raise the standard of life, the standard of physique and the standard of intelligence of society. Otherwise why work? Why not let us revert to more primitive methods? Surely it is fundamentally anti-social to urge that the standard of life should be lower? It is scarcely too strong to call such a thesis a denial of civilization, a betrayal of the human spirit.

What then is wrong? At the risk of being a bore, let me recapitulate as briefly as possible the steps in the argument running through the earlier chapters.

The industrial system began merely as an extension of a system designed to provide a family with its necessities. Power, first water-power, later steam, made the gathering of the personnel under the roof of the factory unavoidable. Out of this arose the crowded towns. The regularity of power imposed on the industrial worker a discipline to which he was unused on the one hand, but which, on the other, concentrated his work so much that

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he was able to earn his necessities in a shorter time. This, coupled with his physical inability to work indefinitely, led to the beginnings of clearly demarcated periods of leisure and toil. The division of existence into a period of labour and a period of leisure created the demand for amusement in the latter period. Hence arose and was gradually extended the whole of the amusement industries. At the same time, the growth of towns led to the regulation of housing, which in turn led to a higher standard of comfort — at a price — and also inoculated part of the population with an ambition for a higher material existence. This ambition was in turn enhanced by two things; first the fall in the cost of living as land overseas was opened up, and by the extension of the industrial system to other countries; secondly by the increase in mechanization, which led to a division in the ranks of the manual workers, on the one side the growth of a skilled technical class, with whom may be associated an increased group employed in distribution and administration, and on the other a growth in the numbers of quarter-skilled and unskilled labourers. The enlargement of the selling area owing to the increased rapidity and cheapening of transport again led to a fall in the cost of necessities. Between 1870 and the end of the century, Great Britain, at the cost to the community of greater insecurity of employment, had solved the most urgent problems of efficient manufacture and distribution of the prime necessities of life. The country had reached the stage at which it had money to spend on amœsities. Here, however, it was at the mercy of undisciplined

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whim. The appreciation of the arts and sciences which form the relaxation of the educated, is only apprehended and understood after an education in aestheticism and technique. Moreover, in the arts, the individual who has been brought up in a cultured circle acquires from his environment and tradition at an impressionable age a modicum of taste which one raised in less easy circumstances only grasps by labour and force of will. Those who imposed the educational system on the country were unaware that any fundamental social change was taking place, and hence of any necessity to adapt education to the stresses of the tertiary stage. Education was designed merely from the point of view of the industrial system. Hence the consumer was vulnerable to attack from any quarter. Without philosophy to guide him, without the normal culture which the earlier 'common man' learned through the traditions of his fathers and his village, he had no critical capacity to tell him what were his real and what his imagined pleasures. Hence he was the prey of any plausible advertiser. Moreover, his appetite for material things increased in like degree with the extension of his leisure and the dropping from his life of all the activities associated with a traditional culture. The only release came in expenditure on objects which filled the vacuum and disguised from him the extent of his loss. This in turn reacted on the commercial structure, since entrepreneurs were no longer able to forecast whither this uneducated, roving taste would direct the consumer. Hence it became doubly necessary for the producer to attempt to control taste through advertising and other

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methods of direction. From this there derived a still further pressure on the consumer to spend. This naturally affected those classes who were led to believe that their status depended rather on their outward appearance, the appearance of their home, their habits — that is all classes save the humblest: and these classes were increasing in numbers and drawing to themselves a larger proportion of the employed population owing to the unavoidable complexities of the division of labour which called into existence a larger administrative and distributive personnel than was necessary in the primitive days of scattered, self-sufficient groups engaged in getting their mere subsistence.

So that on the one side there is the producer trying to guess whither the wandering taste of the consumer is going, and at the same time to direct it towards his own particular commodity. On the other, there is the consumer with no background of reason or of experience as to what are his real necessities, who is equally with the producer the sport of his own undirected, uncomprehended and undisciplined whim — we will not call it desire, since the latter word implies a directed wish, possibly even a need.

In such a state, the consumer, nagged at by conflicting claims, drifts helplessly from choice to choice. 'His heart is so free, it roves like a bee,' but there is no Polly to bring his Macheath fancy to heel. He passes from flower to flower, and in the aggregate spends more than his circumstance warrants. Hence if he is to maintain his expenditure, he refrains from what will mean a heavy

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curtailment of his whims. It may be better to marry than to burn, but an electric washing-machine, a refrigerator, football matches and pools, the little flutter on the 2.30, the greyhound track on Saturday night¹, the instalments on the house, the furniture, the new car, the television set, the insurance and the licence for the car, the camera and its gadgets, the dog (just under three million were licensed in 1930-31),² the lipstick and powder-puff, the permanent wave 'club', the hire-purchased dress, all the methods by which time is killed without lasting satisfaction to the killer, compete with and cheat the cradle.

The dilemma is one which lies before every community as it comes into the tertiary stage before it is ready for it. As necessities are produced with more and more ease, that is with less and less human labour, either those dis-employed must become pensioners of the State (or alternatively hours must be cut down all round without equivalent loss of reward to the worker), or the dis-employed must be put to the production of consumers' goods and services. These new goods and services become the business of the inventor, whether he invents an elaborate television set or merely a variant of leap-frog. And as more leisure becomes available, the greater the spur to the inventor to find leisure occupations. The inventor is naturally supported by the entrepreneur; it

¹ The Greyhound Racing Association, which has a capital of £1,200,000, controls four tracks in London; in 1929 it paid 10 per cent on its ordinary shares; in 1932 it paid 15 per cent; in 1934 it paid nothing; in 1937 it paid 40 per cent. *Economist*, April 8th, 1939.

² Between 1901-1931 the human population of Great Britain increased by 21 per cent; the canine population by 110 per cent.

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is, after all, the latter's speciality. Hence there is competition between inventions. Since none of these is a necessity of life, it becomes the entrepreneur's task to persuade the consumer that his particular brand of product, clock-golf, or caviare, or first editions in the original boards, is a necessity. The consumer, directed by no standard of taste, unable in his boredom and lack of self-sufficiency to resist, accepts suggestion after suggestion with the result that on the one hand he restricts his family to be able to extend his purchases, thus in the end bankrupting the machine which has saved him from drudgery: on the other hand, by the volatility of his choice, he causes unstable markets for tertiary goods, which in turn communicate their instability to producers of secondary and primary goods. The problem in its final conclusion is how to eliminate the capricious choice of the consumer in the tertiary stage. It is thus a problem which must afflict every society entering the tertiary stage, whatever its political system, communist, fascist or democratic.

In the more primitive society, such as existed before the existence of power, man, working either in the fields or the workshop, followed the desires of his body and mind. He worked when he had to, but he broke off when he so desired; his labour and his leisure were merely degrees of intensity and relaxation in the same environment. His life was as much governed by this rhythm as it was by the rhythm of the seasons. That rhythm was broken by the factory and the machine, which enforced an unnatural regularity of hours. While man laboured

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intensely over a period, he was at leisure for another period, during which he was unoccupied. Hence came first the disastrous era of drinking, followed by the demand for something to fill the unoccupied hours. Untrained to employ leisure, the average man fell to the easiest form of amusement, that which made no physical or mental demand on him. 'It is easier to work well, than to use wealth well, and much easier than to use leisure well,' wrote Alfred Marshall. The educational system was designed not to train fully conscious citizens, but to provide adequately, and only adequately, intelligent work-people. It turns out the bulk of the population with no knowledge of what it is here for, no understanding of its personal relationship with society.

These criticisms do not imply that the victims of the tertiary stage are themselves to blame for what has happened to them. The movement has been imperceptible and subtle. The growth of the town narrowed the normal natural pleasures of man so quietly that he could not perceive what was happening. The passive pleasures he takes to-day are compensation for the pleasures he has lost. Who will blame the man who buys a car in order to get away from 'the noisy and extensive scene of crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure'? Who will upbraid the cinema-addict, the listener to the wireless, if these find that active pursuits have been made difficult for them? Nor is the townsman to blame if the congestion of streets and houses makes it impossible for him to possess a garden, grow his own salads, keep his own chickens; if the too close proximity

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of his neighbours forbids him to learn and practise some musical instrument. The townsman is not the culprit but the victim of his environment, which each year affects him more deeply and submerges him.

To suggest that therefore we should return to more primitive ways by the destruction of cities would be foolish. Possibly future generations may be enlightened enough to pull down and to let air and light into our monstrous wens. In any case it will be a slow process, and as we are to-day, public opinion would oppose it. Progressive, not regressive, remedies are required.

The suggestion that parenthood should be financed (Mr. Amery's) is all very well in its way. But it does nothing to solve the permanent and fundamental problem. The inducements offered are to the poorest income groups. It is questionable whether merely feeding mouths is beneficial to the community. Mouths useless save for consumption purposes do not lead to an improvement of society. As the late Dr. William McDougall argued in his well-known *National Welfare and National Decay*, it is not quantity but the quality of the human element which makes good societies. To feed a few million more embryo citizens without taking steps to improve their consciousness of the society they live in, is merely to perpetuate the evils of the tertiary stage and to invite a similar decline in a generation's time as the tertiary stage widens. It is this generation which must take the necessary steps. 'Tell me, Sir,' once cried Sir Boyle Roche in the House of Commons, 'what has posterity done for us?' It is not for posterity that action is

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urgently necessary but for the sake of the already existing.

Because I have criticized Mr. Keynes's economic analysis of the situation, it is not to be taken that I disagree with it. Indeed, it appears to me to contain a great number of germs of the solution. The criticism above was directed to showing that by itself it will not stand, since it does not in any way show a method of arresting the decline in population. If it fails to do this, the policy he recommends must in the long run fall to the ground. But if one combines it with a policy designed to discipline tertiary consumption, there may possibly lie a resolution of the dilemma. 'It will be essential', says Mr. Keynes, 'either that we alter our institutions and the distribution of wealth in a way that causes a smaller proportion of income to be saved, or that we reduce the rate of interest sufficiently to make profitable very large changes in technique or in the direction of consumption which involve a much larger use of capital in proportion to output.' The most socially profitable use of capital in amounts large 'in proportion to output' would be to use it to raise the active intelligence of the community by an extended and radically improved educational system. It is necessary to re-emphasize that when I speak of a policy designed to discipline tertiary consumption, I have not in mind any form of sumptuary legislation, but the directed advance of society towards self-discipline and the habit of discrimination. Much stress is laid nowadays on raising the physique; but given a people which *knows* where it is going, it will look after its own physique without the

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allurements of professional and amateur players of games.

We are fond of talking about democracy and our democratic institutions. But democracy as it was understood in less complex civilizations does not exist. Bentham held that if every man consulted his own interest, the perfect form of society would arise. It may be so or it may not. But the fact is that few people know what is their own interest; movements are not swayed by common sense but by emotion. Only when society is rationally educated shall we have something approaching to a democracy.

By 'rationally educated', I am thinking of an education somewhat different from that provided for even the children of the wealthiest. Even if free secondary education were State-provided for all children instead of for the miserable ten or twelve per cent who receive it to-day, little improvement would be seen. Education up to the age of twenty is, save in rare instances of precocity, little more than the teaching of a technique for further learning, the inculcating of a certain automatic dexterity in the acquisition of certain functions.¹ Much university education is completely wasted, not because the teachers are incompetent, but because the minds of the students are immature. They have no experience to guide them, no knowledge of the world to match against the principles their tutors lay down (hence, of course, 'all the ruthless-

¹ 'From personal experience I would say that last-minute cramming for exams was the most useful training I got at Oxford.' R. H. S. CROSSMAN in *Adult Education*, December 1938, p. 101. My own pre-war experience at Oxford exactly tallies with Mr. Crossman's.

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ness of undergraduates' which Manning found so irritating in Acton); the touchstone of practical experience is missing. The pupils at universities do not know what they want to know, do not know the technique of pursuing an idea, and have no scepticism. By scepticism, I do not mean either lack of enthusiasm or derisive unbelief; but merely the desire for credible evidence. What is urgently required is education of the adult as soon as he has been about a little in the world, when he has acquired some knowledge of the environment in which he has his being. He will then learn to endue himself with something of *le tact des choses possibles*, without which no man, let alone the politician, can hope to avoid either fanaticism or apathy. The curse of societies in the tertiary stage is that they are in truth 'crowds without company'; they are still largely adolescent (four-fifths of the modern cheap periodical is purveyed for the underdeveloped mind). There is a movement on foot of which the slogan is 'education for leisure'; if it succeeds in breeding an alert-minded community, it will do great service. At present, the only people who are not affected by apathy are the peasant and the despised 'highbrow', because both are fully satisfied in their environment and have no need of procured pleasures. Their lives move in a rhythm unbroken by the call of the whistle, the opening of the stock-market, the closing of the shop, the slamming of the typewriter cover. Both are able to take their lore into the lanes and the streets and to move with apprehension of what is going on round them.

Moreover, a society which understands the basic

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conditions of its own survival may find through its understanding a new excitement in existence and in furthering its existence. It may learn to abjure the passive distractions of its present apathetic stage, to find for itself the active pleasures its own inertia as a social body has blinded it to. The tertiary stage, while remaining no less wide, may become more disciplined and rational and less unstable, and indeed extend its frontiers. At the same time, an understanding of the conditions of survival would, unless it is beyond redemption, which I do not believe, urge society to fulfil those conditions. Minds which are coerced by emotions stirred by propaganda to fulfil obligations will relapse as soon as the system which imposes the emotion has grown old or decays. The tertiary stage demands a society which can weigh its present necessities and foresee, if even dimly, the future of its descendants. It demands above everything the elimination of — to use the word in its proper sense — the proletariat, which exists in large quantities in every stratum of society.

I have shown how man in this country has by the use of his wits fumbled, wrestled with and overcome materials which appeared immalleable, has experimented and been defeated, and, having no gift but the capacity to reason, has come to a point at which he is — who knows? — about to emerge triumphantly to possess his natural environment. Nature in fact has been almost conquered.

Almost — for Nature has timed her counter-stroke at the correct hour against the least guarded flank. In the lust of conflict man has forgotten one thing, himself.

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While he has largely mastered the resources of the world he lives in, he has failed to prepare himself to take advantage of these resources. In the richest countries in the world, equipped to provide himself with all he needs, just at the point when the whole face of civilization might be changed, he is about to go down into the abyss, simply because he was too apathetic, too unimaginative, and too greedy to understand the need to provide for the continuance of his race, even to understand in what ways and by what dangers it is threatened. In the very period when people chatter of a world of plenty, Nature appears as if about to take her revenge, and to turn the material aspirations of millions into the dust of vanished hopes.

The slow and fumbling reasoning which has brought us so far on the road to ease and leisure, bears in itself the seeds of its own defeat. Before the outbreak of this new war, men used to say: 'The next war will end civilization.' That is unlikely — unless we have gone so far back on the way to barbarism that extermination is sanctified. No: our defeat will be mean and slow. 'The abyss may also be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots.'

